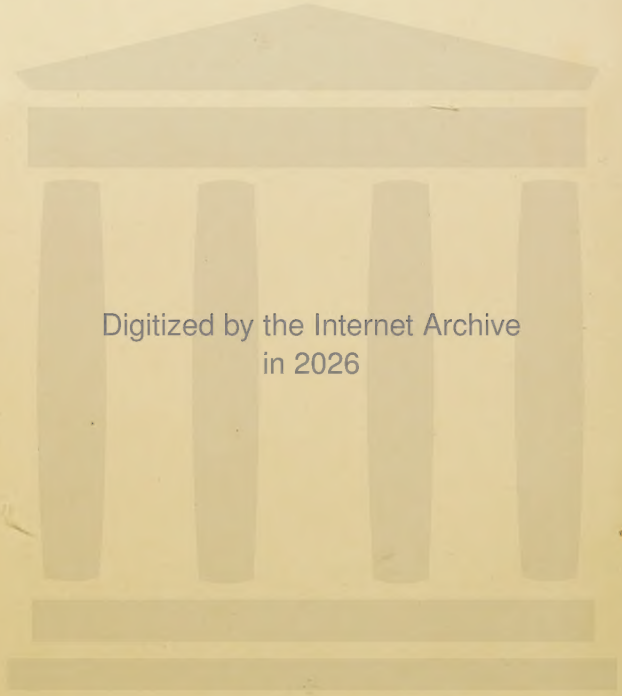
SERMONS ON BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

WILLIAM WISTAR HALL, D.D.

SECOND SERIES



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SERMONS ON BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

VOLUME TWO

REV. WILLIAM WISTAR HAMILTON, D.D.

By Rev. WILLIAM WISTAR HAMILTON, TH.D., D.D.

Sermons on Books of the Bible
Sane Evangelism
Bible Evangelism
Wisdom in Soul Winning
The Helping Hand
How to Grow in the Christian Life
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BY
REV. WILLIAM WISTAR HAMILTON
TH.D., D.D.

VOLUME TWO

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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SERMONS ON BOOKS OF THE BIBLE VOLUME TWO
— A —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEDICATED TO
THE GOD-GIVEN WIFE WHOSE LOVE
FOR THE BIBLE AND FOR THE MESSIAH
HAS BEEN AN ABIDING AND AN INCREASING
HELP TO THE PREACHER IN HIS
PREPARATION AND DELIVERY
OF SERMONS

FOREWORD

The interest taken in the first volume of these sermons and the gracious words which have been spoken and printed and penned in personal letters concerning "Sermons on Books of the Bible," have been a constant encouragement and help to the writer as he has studied and written and prayed and preached. Oftentimes as he has delivered the messages to those before him, he has in imagination seen another and a larger congregation to whom he hoped God might permit him to speak through the printed page.

The Bible has become dearer and dearer as its messages have become better known. The writers and those about whom they wrote have lived in a new and more real way, and the preacher has discovered how human they are and how like himself in needs, in temptations, in struggles, in longings, in hopes, and fears. The times and the factors portrayed, in what had been heretofore a past age, have been so modern and so like our own, that the Old Testament is to the author fresher than the morning newspaper. One of our great men was asked why he believed the Bible to be inspired, and his reply was "Because you may cut it anywhere you wish, and it will bleed." The Bible is alive. It has blood in it, real, human, red blood.

The purpose and plan and promise of redemption have more than ever before taken the supreme place in the writer's thought of the Old Testament. The tracing of the history of the family has had a fascina-

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tion about it that has quickened the mind and thrilled the heart. It has brought new light and new love and new loyalty, and has added delight to the pastor's study and has kindled anew the flame in the pulpit.

Those who have attended upon the delivery of the sermons, as the pastor was able to prepare them in the midst of a busy life, have been most helpful by their presence and prayers and appreciation, and he has noticed that on days when a book sermon was announced the audience was larger and the interest more marked and the response more general. Many have re-read that portion of the Bible on which the sermon was to be preached, and have thus prepared themselves for a more intelligent hearing and have been all the more helpful to the preacher. Children and young people have made up their share of the audience, and some have copied from the blackboard the outlines which have each time been a part of the method used in the delivery of the messages.

The most satisfactory evidence of God's favor upon these book sermons has been the salvation of the lost and the bringing back to church membership and Christian activity of many who had moved into the city and who had drifted into coldness and indifference. The word of Jehovah as given in the Old Testament books has been made the power of God in leading men and women and young people to the promised Messiah, the Savior of those who believe on him.

The author wishes to say again, as was said in the foreword of the first volume of these sermons, that his purpose in the messages is not critical or exegetical, though he has sought always to be true to the best scholarship and the most careful exegesis. His chief desire has been to find Jehovah in the Holy of Holies

of divinely inspired Word of God, and there to see the Master face to face, and there to know by experience the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life, and thus to be ready by new life and testimony and service to testify to the grace and mercy and power of God in salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How often it is true that those who seemingly are in want and walk humbler paths are the ones who are most favored of God! In a recent "Who's Who in America" the record shows that 2695 names were of those who had a Protestant clergyman as father. This is about eleven per cent of the total, and they came from about four per cent of the male population of the country. Children from the homes of preachers had fully twenty-eight times the chance of becoming useful and famous as those who are brought up under any other conditions. The religious atmosphere, the pure motive, the high ideal, the absence of godless wealth, the appreciation of true values, the reverence for God, the study of the Bible, the early surrender to Christ as Savior all tend to the making of abiding and useful character and life.

A minister was trying to win a young man to Christ whose father was a prominent and successful physician. After the importance of being a Christian was urged upon him, the son said, "The best man in this city is not a Christian; why should I be?" The preacher asked as to who this could be, and the boy's reply was, "My father is the best man who walks the streets of this city, and he is not a Christian. Why should I be one?" This physician had not realized how untrue he had been to the hope which he held, and how his lack of grateful obedience might be a curse to others, even to his own. The faithful minister of that community soon made

known to the father what had been said, and showed him how he was allowing evil forces to reign in his own life and helping them to reign in the soul of his son. "Did my boy say that?" "He certainly did." "Pastor, what is the first service in your church at which I could make a public confession of Christ?" The physician was present at the eight o'clock meeting, and when the opportunity was given he walked down the aisle signifying his faith in Jesus and his readiness to obey his Lord. The son was present, and saw his father go forward for church membership, and was soon at his father's side.

W. W. H

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	FOREWORD	vii
1	JOB Who proved that God's family serve for naught	15
2	PSALMS The happy members of the family of God	35
3	PROVERBS The wisest children in the family	59
4	ECCLESIASTES The meaning of life to a preacher in the family	85
5	SONG OF SOLOMON A love story preserved for the family	105
6	ISAIAH A great statesman-prophet in the family	125
7	JEREMIAH A prophet who became a martyr for the family	145
8	LAMENTATIONS Sorrow over the afflictions of the family	169
9	EZEKIEL The family's philosophy of life	191
10	DANIEL The family tested among foreign peoples	215

1: JOB

(1) *God's plan from Genesis to Esther.*
(2) *The parallelism of Hebrew poetry.*
(3) *The book of Job and the man.*
(4) *The problem of human suffering.*

I. SCENES INCIDENT TO JOB'S TRIALS.

1 Sons of God and Satan in their midst.
2 Satan's challenge concerning Job.
3 The tests which proved Job worthy.

II. DANGERS WHICH ACCOMPANY SUFFERING.

1 Perplexity which may deepen into despair.
2 Distrust which may come from lack of faith.
3 Complaint which may turn to rebellion.

III. THEORIES ADVANCED BY JOB'S FRIENDS.

1 General law of cause and effect.
2 Retributive justice for some particular sin.
3 Disciplinary chastisement for yielding to wrong.
4 Instruction in righteousness to prevent evil.

IV. SECRET REVEALED BY JEHOVAH.

1 God's wisdom infinite and we should trust.

2 God's power limitless and we need not fear.

3 God's goodness genuine and we must not doubt.

4 God's purpose gracious and we shall be happy.

CONCLUSION:

1 Suffering can only harm our bodies.

2 Suffering develops the best that is in us.

3 Suffering enables us to help others.

4 Suffering fitted Jesus for succoring us.

Bible—"All things work together for good."

Fletcher—"Calamity is man's true touchstone."

Henry—"Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions."

Brooks—"Afflictions are but as a dark entry into our Father's house."

Longfellow—"What seem to us but dim funeral tapers may be heaven's distant lamps."

Spurgeon—"As sure as God ever puts his children into the furnace, he will be in the furnace with them."

Hamilton—"It is the crushed grape that gives out the blood-red wine: it is the suffering soul that breathes the sweetest melodies."

Hall—"We should be more anxious that our afflictions benefit us than that they should be speedily removed from us."

1: JOB

or

THE MAN WHO PROVED THAT GOD'S FAMILY SERVE FOR NAUGHT

God wants a family of children who love holiness for its own sake, and through the books of the Bible from Genesis to Esther we have followed the pillar of cloud and of fire as Jehovah has been leading his people to their Promised Land. We saw God's desire and the beginning of his plan in Genesis, the program of the family in Exodus, the ideals in Leviticus, the wilderness school in Numbers, and the review in Deuteronomy. In Joshua we studied the family possessions, in Judges the making of religion safe, in Ruth the importance of the individual, in First Samuel the leaders of the family, in Second Samuel the hall of fame, in First Kings the sins of royalty, in Second Kings the wrong kinds of religion, in First Chronicles the family diary, in Second Chronicles the age long struggle, in Ezra the blessings of adversity, in Nehemiah some characteristics of God's children, and in Esther the woman who rescued the family while in exile.

Now we turn from the books of history to a consideration of the philosophy of life. The world has always faced the problem of the origin and character of evil, the explanation of the trials of good people,

the question of divine providence, the delay of justice against those who are wicked, the reconciliation of what seems to be unmerited suffering with the goodness and the justice of God, the charge of Satan and his followers that no one chooses holiness for its own sake, and that even such a good man as Job does not "fear God for naught."

In the book of Job all of the above problems are discussed, and the divine author is giving us through the writer a treatise on theology, an exposition of divine providence, a discussion of the psychology of life, an example of a man of strength and wisdom and piety who proved to Satan and to the world, that those who are children in the family of God have made the exalted choice of holiness and will serve God even when such service does not seem to bring any seemingly good results. Job was a man who did not work for reward. He was loyal to the right and to God; he was reaching out in the darkness for the divine hand; he was hungry for the presence of Jehovah; he believed that faith and right would survive all loss and suffering; he insisted that the Lord was to be trusted even though everything seemed contradictory, and even though Jehovah himself should slay him.

Job and the Psalms and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are books of poetry, and include the five kinds of parallelism which are characteristic of Hebrew thought. Poetry with these writers was not that of mere rhyme, or rhythm, or metre, or melody; but rather a rhythmical arrangement of thought, a placing of ideas in parallel sentences and stanzas, so that the meaning would be the more readily and clearly and forcibly seen.

Hebrew parallelism may be apposite, when the same

thought is given both positively and negatively, as when it is said, "Trust in the Lord . . . lean not unto thine own understanding." It may be opposite, when a sharp distinction is drawn between contradictory thoughts, as "The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot." The synonymous repeats the same thought in equivalent terms and phrases, as "To give subtilty to the simple; to the young man knowledge and discretion." The synthetic builds up the thought in a cumulative way, in several pairs of parallels, as in Psa. 19:7-9, where the law of the Lord is said to be "perfect," "sure," "right," "pure," "clean," "true," "righteous." The inverted parallelism places the same thought at the centre, and moves toward this basal idea from the two extremes, as "The wicked will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."

The book of Job is an epic narrative, a dramatic poem, based evidently on historical facts. The way of writing history into a novel or a poem has always been popular, and was never more so than today. The author, who possibly was Elihu, seems to have been an ear-witness and an eye-witness to the facts, and though Job was what might be termed a Gentile still the Jews gave this book of practical theology a place in their Bible. This is probably the earliest of the Bible books, but those who take part in its thought are not to be despised for they stand on the heights as to intellectual gifts and discernment. Their thoughts are more profound than any that have ever been voiced by man, and in no way suffer by comparison with the writings of today, but manifest a power unknown to any mere human productions.

The place is the land of Uz, east of the Jordan. Uz

was the first-born of Nahor, brother of Abraham. The time when the events occurred was about 2000 B.C., and would fit into the eleventh or twelfth chapters of Genesis, following the scattering of the people from Babel and near the time when Abraham was called of God to go into the far country. The book discusses what we are to believe concerning God; later in the Psalms we shall see how we are to conduct ourselves toward God, and the third of the "Books of Wisdom," the Proverbs, will tell us how we are to live toward man.

The man Job was not a Stoic. He felt deeply his losses, the taking away of his children and his wealth. The insinuations of the friends who visited him cut him to the quick, and he showed that he felt keenly all the things that went with his suffering. He was an Arab sheik, and not of the Hebrew race. He was a good man and was rich, and evidently was one of the greatest characters of his day. Satan brought against him the charge that he served God because it paid him to do so. Jehovah replied that this was not true, that Job's goodness was apart from gain, and that his righteousness was genuine and unselfish and was not based on reward.

Satan was allowed finally to afflict Job in any way he desired, only his life was to be spared. The man of God was much perplexed and knew not how to explain it all. The three friends, who came to condole with him, insisted that his sorrow and suffering were due to sin, but in the consciousness of his integrity Job denied such a possibility and refuted the arguments brought forward. Why then does this good man suffer? Why does the God of love and justice permit it? How can a good man who is sorely afflicted con-

tinue to be trustful and loyal, when he knows that his life has been worthy?

The theme of the Book of Job is God's moral government; the factors are God and Satan and Job and his friends; the question at issue is that of unselfish piety; the power allowed to evil is limited by Jehovah; the philosophy of life held by Job's friends is inadequate; the new thought of Elihu is likewise insufficient; the words of the Lord are remarkable for what they do not say as well as for what is stated; the frailty and ignorance of men concerning the simplest facts are most humiliating; one glimpse of God, and Job is on his knees; if God is so far beyond man in his holiness and justice and love and wisdom and power, then surely he will do right and can be trusted. These are the things to be kept in mind as we study this wonderful book.

Chapters one and two which form the introduction are written in prose. Then from three to thirty-one we have Job's expression of his sorrow and three series of addresses by Job's three friends, each one being answered each time by him. In chapters thirty-two to thirty-seven Elihu speaks, and Job makes no reply, and then Jehovah enters into the discussion in chapters thirty-eight to forty-one. The final chapter is in prose. It gives the conclusion of all that has been considered previously and shows what God did for the man who served him for naught and who could be trusted with a great sorrow.

1. Scenes incident to Job's trials are described (1 and 2). These form the background for the discussions which follow. In the first scene Job is portrayed as being happy and prosperous and upright. In the next

Satan is pictured as coming before the Lord with the angels, and in answer to Jehovah's commendation of Job makes reply that his righteousness is not sincere, and Job is given into Satan's hands to test, with the one reservation that no evil should come to Job himself. Then Satan brought upon him one calamity after another, in which his losses of flocks and herds were brought to climax in the death of his children. In all these sorrows Job kept his trust in God, and did not rebel against the terrible calamities which befell him.

A second time the sons of God are gathered together and Satan is again among them, and now says that Job would not still be true if he himself should suffer. This time the only restriction is that Job's life be spared, for Jehovah has confidence in his servant. Satan challenges the uprightness of Job, and attempts to prove that disease and pain will be too much for his piety, that his faith in God cannot survive adversity, that all a man has he will give for his life. With the coming of the loathsome boils his wife turns against him, and bids him curse God and die, for surely there is no room now for trust. Possessions gone, children dead, body scourged; what could then be left? For seven days and nights friends who came to sympathize with him sat in silence, having no word of comfort to offer. Then Job himself spoke to his friends of his misfortunes, and the discussion began.

Sometimes young Christians are amazed at the temptations and the struggles which come to them after they have turned from the service of the devil. Sometimes we are shocked at the criticisms and objections and complaints and opposition which develop in the midst of revival meetings, forgetting that the evil one is not going meekly to submit to invasions into his

ranks. "A dog though never so fierce, doth not bark at those of his own household. So the dogs of hell will never bark at men so long as they are of the devil's household." So long as Satan has willing obedience his hand and voice are not raised against a man, but if once the soul begins to rebel and to break with sin, then the devil may be expected to do his worst. When the sower goes forth to sow, the fowls of the air go forth to catch away the seed, and in a church with consecration and purpose Satan may be expected to watch his chance to get in and cause trouble.

An invalid woman, tempted to be impatient under the twenty years of suffering, was asking, "Oh, why does God thus deal with me?" In a dream she was carried across the sea and to a strange city, where in a building with many windows, she saw the workmen shaping and polishing diamonds. The process was explained, and one workman was asked why he would grind, and then look and bear harder and grind again. He replied that it was in order to remove every flaw, and because this diamond was to have a place in the crown which was being made for the king they were taking all the more pains with it. When the dreamer awoke she was back on her bed of suffering, and an angel seemed to say, "Daughter, dost thou understand the vision?" "Oh, yes, but may I ask you just one question?" "Certainly you may." Then said the invalid, "Were you sent to show me the vision?" "Assuredly I was." "Then," said the sufferer, "maybe God is polishing me and maybe I shall have a place in the King's crown."

2. The dangers which are always present are suggested (3). As Job describes his suffering he is grieved that he ever was born, and wonders why he

should have been brought into the land of the living. The soul of the man was crying out for light and for comfort. He was as much in the dark as to what all this could mean as are sufferers today, and along with his perplexity two grave dangers were in his path. One was that he would be found to be lacking in faith, and the other was that he would become rebellious toward God.

If suffering had proved to Job and to Satan and to us, that Job was upright because it paid to be so, how great the loss would have been. It will be a sad day for us, too, if we prove to ourselves in some season of adversity that we are Christian only because of what we get out of it, rather than because of a true love of holiness and because of genuine grace in the heart.

Rebellion against God and complaint against him, indicate absence of trust and disclose to us a sin into which many fall in their bereavements and sorrows and sufferings. Job was tempted to rebel, was told to do so by his wife, but we are grateful that he did not yield. We too are beset by perplexity when we see that calamities so grievous can come to those who are truly upright. The accumulation of our trials, piled one upon another only aggravate the situation, and make it the more difficult for us to understand in connection with one whose life ideals are high.

False charges were brought against Job by his friends. They said that they pitied him but they also charged him with some unusual wrong doing, and asserted that this evil in his life was the cause of his bereavement and of his suffering. Even his wife, who should have helped and encouraged him in his efforts to bear up bravely and keep his faith clear, added to

his sorrow by taunting him and by advising him to plunge into the costliest and most deadly of sins.

Martin Luther tells that once when he was sorely vexed and tried by his own sinfulness and by the wickedness of the world about him and by the dangers that beset the church, he found his wife dressed in mourning. Much surprised he asked who had died, and was even more surprised when she said, "Do you not know? God in heaven is dead." Luther said, "How can you talk such nonsense? God cannot die. He is immortal, and will live through eternity." "Is that really true," she asked? "Of course it is true," said Luther, not yet perceiving what his wife was trying to accomplish. "As sure as there is a God in heaven, so sure it is that he can never die." She then made reply, "And yet, though you do not doubt God's existence and power, still you act as if God were dead, and you become discouraged and hopeless." Not until then did Luther see her meaning, and realizing the folly and the sin of doubt he mastered his sadness and his worry.

Two buckets went to the spring, and one of them said, "Do you not see that no matter how often we go to the spring and are filled, we are soon emptied?" The other said, "I was just thinking that no matter how often we are emptied, we are soon taken to the spring and filled again." A pessimistic lady was met on the street in a Kentucky city by a friend who asked after her health, and in reply she said, "I feel better today, but I always feel bad when I feel better, because I know I am going to feel worse."

3. The theories as to the philosophy of pain and suffering are discussed, and make up the larger part of the book (4-37). There are three cycles of speeches

by Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar, each being answered in turn by Job. At first Job is reminded that he is suffering in keeping with the common lot of man, that God is just, and that his sufferings have a just cause. Job appeals for pity, says he must have relief, acknowledges his inability to argue with God, and speaks of the future life where all will be made right.

Then the friends rebuke Job for his presumption and for not being willing to admit his unrighteousness, and they insist further that there must be some particular wrong of which he is guilty and on account of which these afflictions have come. He is told by Zophar also that any escape from the wages of sin is only temporary, and is warned against presumption. Again Job maintains his position, that there has not been in his life such unusual wrong as to bring this unusual punishment.

In the third series of conversations the friends make definite what they had only insinuated before, and tell Job that he has certainly been guilty of wrong doing, that he has not been upright in his attitude toward God, and that he should come to Jehovah in humility and penitence and ask forgiveness. Job wishes that he might be permitted to come before God, and there be cleared of these unjust charges. He maintains that he has not been guilty of any crime, and shows that he and his friends are agreed in their philosophy of suffering and that on the basis of suffering for sin he has not been worse than others. They did not see and know what the book of Job reveals, and were basing all of their conclusions upon the one assumption that sin on man's part and chastening and discipline on God's part are the only reasons for suffering.

In the first series of conversations the attributes of God were upheld to Job by these counsellors, and the only conclusion possible, so they maintained, was that Job was guilty of sin, or he would not be suffering. Then if his affliction was due to sin, it must be due, (1) to the general law of cause and effect, the organic sin of the race, the general sin of man, or (2) to retributive judgment upon some particular sin, or (3) to disciplinary chastisement upon a good man who had yielded to the temptations peculiar to a man in his position, or (4) to instruction in righteousness which God by sorrows and trials gives to the pious and by which they are saved from drifting into evil.

These four friends have each a well-marked individuality, and they present different aspects of religious conviction among men, and are worthy of our best study. Eliphaz is the Stoic, who on each occasion opens the debate, and who approaches the situation in a calm and dignified way, and who seeks to be well poised and considerate and just. He was perhaps the oldest of the friends. Bildad is the Puritan, an observer of life from the strictly business viewpoint, and believes much in the conclusions of practical and thoughtful men. Zophar is the Dogmatist, a man of very strong convictions, who states definitely his beliefs, is irritated if anybody differs with him, and insists that men should live by the truth and that if they do so all will go well with them.

Elihu is the Unitarian, the New Theology advocate. He has had the latest and the broadest culture. He is the one who has the æsthetic sense and feeling, and who is sure that when he speaks all the ages are represented in his conclusions and all the people should give

heed and follow. It is interesting that there was no Christian Scientist in the list, and none who denied the fact of sin, the reality of suffering, or who insinuated in any wise that all this was due to a defect of mortal mind.

Good friends are such a blessing, and how their presence and sympathy do help! What an opportunity sorrow and suffering offer for being a comfort to others! Surely there is never a time when friends mean more to us than when we are sick and in trouble. Job's friends have done their best, but is what they believe and say all? Is there nothing more to be said? Can we not by faith and by reason and by revelation find some more satisfactory and complete explanation for the sufferings which come to people who love and fear God? Let us with Job and his friends give heed now to what Jehovah himself will say!

4. The secret is revealed by the Lord and some conclusions are reached (38-42). The opening chapters give us an insight into the fact that Job's sufferings had a divine reason, a good purpose which a heavenly Father was all the time maintaining. All this was hidden from Job and his friends, and as is so often the case with us today was beyond all possible human understanding.

(1) The wisdom of God in sorrow should not be questioned by short-sighted and sinful men. Before charging God with injustice, or with lack of wisdom, or with failure to protect the upright man, Job should take a survey of simple problems about him every day, and see how ignorant and weak he is even in these smallest matters. Take for example the instincts and habits of the animals and the birds, or the laws and phenomena of the material world. Where was man

when the foundations of the world were laid; who shut up the sea with doors; where does light dwell, and whence does darkness come; who knows the mother of the snow and the father of the rain; where do the horse and the ostrich and the goat and the eagle get their peculiarities and their powers? If we cannot know these simple things, may it not be that God, who controls all of these and who gave them their respective places, is too wise for us to fully understand him.

(2) God is great as well as wise, and is able to make and order things according to his will. If God is omniscient and omnipotent, and if he be just and good, then surely the suffering must be permitted by him, and must have behind it a good and worthy purpose. A college boy wrote back to his father somewhat as follows: "This is your birthday, and I am just writing to say how much I love you. There was a time when it seemed to me that you were hard on me and were too strict, and I resented it. Since going away from home and being with other boys there has slowly come to me a realization of what was about me in my home, the ideals and training and blessings which others do not seem to possess. This letter is written to thank you for it all, and to say that I love you for that which I once resented, and that should I ever have a home of my own I want it to be like the one in which I grew up."

(3) God is wise and we should trust him; God is great and we need have no fear; and God is good, and we must never doubt. His character, embracing his wisdom and power and justice and love and mercy and grace and faithfulness, is the pledge that even in affliction there may be found his good purposes toward

us and his great blessings for us. In Job we receive the divine revelation which we need on this subject, and though human help is unavailing and unsatisfying, there does come an understanding and a peace to those who are humble and trustful.

(4) God is bringing blessings to his children which could come to them in no other way. Parents must often do what children cannot understand, and they are better off and happier when they have learned to be obedient and trustful. God's confidence in Job was not misplaced, and out of his suffering there came greater blessings for himself and an opportunity to be the channel of good to the world for all time to come.

To those who suffer there come bigger spiritual visions, greater appreciation of earthly enjoyment, absolute and unquestioning trust, a doubling of material blessings, the refining of worthy character, the purifying of personality, the testing of moral principle, the ability to sympathize and help, a truer estimate of material values, a preparation for the joys of heaven, and the possibility of being among those servants of God who shall continue to serve him in eternity.

There is a myth as to the birds that when first created they had no wings, and that later God gave them burdens to bear. The birds had beautiful plumage and could sing, but could not soar. They took up the burdens willingly, and laid them on their shoulders. At first they seemed heavy to bear, but as they obeyed and cheerfully bore them and folded them over their hearts, the burdens grew fast to their shoulders and became wings to lift them. The burdens became pinions and the weights became wings. We too may

so bear our burdens that they will become wings to lift us above the world and up to God. Job could be trusted with a great sorrow, and no greater honor could come to us than that of being given such a difficult post for Jehovah.

A young man was asked by a fellow passenger how much he received for wearing the total abstinence badge, which was to be seen on the lapel of his coat. The bantering tone gave way to wonder when the reply was given: "That I cannot exactly say, but I do know that it costs me about $100,000 a year to wear it. My father is a rich brewer, and I was the intended successor in my father's business until I became convinced of the evil of the business and refused it, and began to give myself to something better." The wearer of that badge was Frederick Charrington, whose name became so well known and loved for its many years of helpful and constructive and far reaching philanthropy.

Satan, the world, suffering can only harm the body, but can never harm the soul which trusts the Lord. The watchcase may be bruised and battered, but the works inside must be safely kept if it is to serve and to be dependable. The opal may have no beauty at all, but when it is given the warmth of the human hand there will not be a place on it without the gleam of the rainbow. The heart and soul of man need the glow of the divine touch to bring out their best and greatest glories.

A story is told of a visitor being taken into a room at an asylum with a young woman about her own age, who stood in stony hopelessness with her face to the wall, and would neither look nor speak. The doctor said to the visitor, "Will you speak to her? We can

do nothing with her. She has been thus for days, but one like yourself might move her." The young lady, praying God to help, approached and placed her hand on her shoulder, and with tears said a few words of yearning sympathy and compassion. The patient turned, looked earnestly into the visitor's face stained with tears, and then burst into tears herself. The spell was broken, and the physician said, "Thank God, she may now be saved." Sympathy and tears did what medical skill had failed to accomplish, and the fellowship of human suffering is a blessing which none but those who have suffered can ever know. Even so it has been said of our Savior, that he is able to succor them that are tempted, because he too under temptation has suffered, and let us continue to look unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

During the Decian persecution a religious leader was asked to show the Prefect the most precious treasure of the church at Rome, and so he brought out to the ruler the sick and the lame and the blind. Julian the Apostate said, "These Galileans nourish not only their own poor, but ours also." Lucian who made fun of the followers of Jesus and claimed to be a skeptic said, "It is incredible to see the ardor with which these Christians help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator put it into their heads that they are all brothers. When in the year 252 A.D. the terrible plague raged in Carthage, the heathen put their sick and dead into the streets and left them from fear of contagion, but the followers of Jesus took care of their own and also of those who were neglected. It is this same filial fear of the Lord

God Jehovah that has led to the love of others in all ages and climes, and that has found expression in missions, in hospitals, in homes, in charity, in personal work, in self-sacrifice. The little ragged boy who, with cheerful heart and smiling face was carrying another child on his back, expressed for us what our hearts should feel, when he said, "Why, mister, he ain't heavy, he's my brother." May we learn to know our Lord and Savior so truly, that we too shall be in the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister!

It is told of Charles Wesley, that although he had for a long time been preaching with great earnestness and zeal, he did not really know the peace of God until a time when a most serious illness came upon him and death seemed near at hand. A Moravian friend, Peter Bohler, came to see him, and asked him, "Do you hope to be saved?" Mr. Wesley told him that this was true of him, and his friend said, "For what reason do you hope to be saved?" Charles Wesley's answer was, "Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God." Peter Bohler shook his head and remained silent, but that significant shake of the head set Wesley to thinking, and he realized that he was depending upon works rather than upon Christ. Later conversation with his Moravian friend led him to trust only in Jesus, and he was able from that sick room to write for the first time, "I now find myself at peace with God." Following this, he wrote, "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise."

2: PSALMS

(1) *"Happy"—Blessed the key word to the Psalms.*

(2) *The authors and the divisions.*

(3) *The purposes and the contrast.*

(4) *The secret of the "blessedness."*

I. CORRECT DOCTRINES AS TO GOD.

One God—Known—Near—In Control—Holy—Good—Longsuffering—Just.

II. SEEING THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN HISTORY.

1 The sins of Israel.

2 The goodness of Jehovah.

3 The evidences of his love and mercy.

III. FINDING THE LESSONS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

1 In the development of character.

2 In the hopes and triumphs of life.

3 In the sorrows and failures of the proud and evil.

IV. LIFTING THE HEART IN DEVOTION AND WORSHIP.

1 Sorrow for sin and the joy of forgiveness.

2 Desire of uprightness and trust.

3 Intercession and deliverance.

V. DELIGHTING IN GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING.

1 Individual mercies and safety.

2 National guidance and blessing.

3 Salvation and likeness to God.

VI. LOOKING TO THE COMING MESSIAH.

1 Promise of his birth and character.

2 Prophecy of his betrayal and agony.

3 Certainty of his eternal kingdom.

Bible—"We count them happy which endure."

Sheridan—"Happiness is an exotic of celestial birth."

Phillips Brooks—"Happiness is the natural flower of duty."

Aughey—"Happiness without peace is temporal; peace along with happiness is eternal."

Lytton—"Happiness and virtue react upon each other—the best are not only the happiest, but the happiest are usually the best."

Ballou—"The act of divine worship is the inestimable privilege of man, the only created being who bows in humility and adoration."

Hemans—"Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod,
They have left unstained, what there they found—
Freedom to worship God."

Psalms—"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth."

2: PSALMS

or

THE HAPPY MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF GOD

"Happy!" This is the word we find written over the portal as we enter the music room of the Bible. Happy is that child in the family of God who knows the way of godliness, and who with praise and prayer follows in the steps of those who wrote the Psalms. In all of our studies from Genesis to Job we have found the same great fact, which is repeated so clearly and beautifully in the first of the Psalms, that the way of the godly is blessed and that the way of the ungodly is full of sorrow and brings up at last in disaster and death.

Praise, prayer, hymns, odes, songs are all in this collection of one hundred and fifty Psalms, and in them is to be found every phase of human experience, from the most trying vicissitudes of sorrow and trouble and treachery and sin and suffering to the most joyous and triumphant victories for body and mind and soul. Here we have expressed for us the prayer thoughts of humble and sincere and godly souls, and here are voiced the longings and the struggles and the comforts of hungry hearts in such a way as to meet the needs of the children of God through the ages, as they have felt the necessity of communion with God.

For tenderness and for strength, for resignation and for triumph, for faith and hope and love they have never been equalled.

The Psalms are as a string of pearls. They are "Judah's jewels." They are a rich and precious heritage. They are the "treasury of David." They are the closet prayers of the Savior. They are lyrics for public worship and for private devotion. They are songs of creation, of providence, of justice, of grace, of pilgrimage, of penitence, of trust, of love, of loyalty. Athanasius said, "They are the epitome of all Scripture." Basil said, "They are the common treasury of all good precepts." Bishop Alexander said, "They are witnesses to Christ and to Christianity."

Pierson said, "Here is a 'Book of Devotion' for the ages. Here every heart chord is touched and tuned to holy melody. God is here in his natural and moral attributes. Christ is here in his divinity and humanity, humiliation and exaltation. The gospel is here, sublime unfoldings of pardoning and purifying grace. Christian life is here, faith, hope, love; and even church history in outline." One stands as on the shores of a boundless, fathomless sea, and dwells upon the greatness, the wealth, the mysteries, the power, the beauty. One may dip into its waters anywhere, may sail out above its depths at any time, and never do so without finding them invigorating, helpful, beautiful, changeful, awe-inspiring, glorious.

The book of Psalms gets its name from the Greek "Psalmoi" and not from the Hebrew "Tehilim." The Psalms are divided by the Jews into five sections; though there seems to be no special reason for this arrangement, unless it be the order in which they were formerly brought together. The divisions are as fol-

lows, for the first book Psalms 1 to 42, for the second 43 to 72, for the third 73 to 89, for the fourth 90 to 106, and for the fifth 107 to 150. Psalms 1 to 72 are also known as "The Prayers of David," due to the fact probably that they are so pervaded by the spirit of supplication and communion and worship. All of the Psalms except twenty-five have some sort of superscription or title, and to those which have no such title given the Talmud gave the name "Orphan Psalms." These titles, or superscriptions, are of doubtful origin, but they are given as early as the Septuagint, and are worthy of a high place as showing the very early opinion of the Jews concerning the Psalms.

There are a number of untranslated terms along with the Psalms, the one occurring most often being "Selah." This was probably a musical term indicating a pause in the singing, and maybe suggesting emphasis as if to say "Think of that." The word "Degrees" is found about fifteen times, and probably signifies a pilgrim song for those journeying to Zion, or maybe this designation was given because these songs were sung on fifteen steps leading from one court of the temple up to another. "Maschil" occurs thirteen times, and is supposed to mean a poem which calls for meditation and which emphasizes true wisdom and piety.

The Psalms were evidently written at different times and under quite a variety of conditions. Of the authors, David was the chiefest of God's sweet singers, and seventy-three, or about half of the whole number, are ascribed to him; twelve are credited to Asaph, who was one of David's chief musicians; eleven are named as written by the sons of Karah, a family of musicians; Psalms 72 and 127 are said to have been written by Solomon; Ethan whom David made a chief musician

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along with Asaph and Heman, wrote Psalm 89; and Psalm 90 was written by Moses. About one-third of the total number are anonymous, though the Septuagint assigns some of these to David.

As an expression of moral purposes and religious longings the Psalms surpass any of the Old Testament writings. They bring to us the sublimest conceptions of Jehovah as the creator and preserver of all things; they give us the finest statements of faith and loyalty and resignation; they breathe a devotion that always helps us in our approach to the Lord; they present a virility and strength in their utterances against the enemies of God's people which show that the imprecatory Psalms looked upon the wicked as rebels against God, who have not only rejected his mercy and grace but have set themselves to fight against and if possible destroy his kingdom and his power.

The good purpose of the Lord in giving us the Psalms was probably, (1) to give the great themes of life in such a way as to make them available for the devotional needs of hungry hearts in every age and among all nations. "As the waters mirror the stars, so do the Psalms reflect the thoughts of Israel upon great subjects. The authors are not guessing at truths, but are positive in their convictions and positive in their statement of their convictions." Creation and law and justice and goodness and love and mercy and Zion and the King and Messiah are seen in the light of God's relation to man and man's relation to God.

(2) The experiences of others are portrayed in their most sacred and holy hours, in their falling and rising again, in their defeats and their victories, so that we may know how frail we are and how eager Jehovah is to help. "A marvelous record of human hearts pour-

ing themselves out from age to age in communion with God." "Here are touched all of the vicissitudes of human experience, the depths of human trouble and the heights of joy."

(3) Surely, too, our God must have had in mind our special need of aids to worship, and preserved to us the Psalms that they might help us in our attempts to worship acceptably, and that they might fan into flame the spark of love for Jehovah and might strengthen and encourage our confidence in him. Sometimes we wonder if the Psalms are the closet prayers of our Savior, and if they speak to us of the Son of God himself in his communion with the Father.

(4) They witness to the world in a beauty of language and in a wealth of devotion as to the excellencies of the true God and the one satisfying religion, and they call upon all mankind everywhere to come to the Lord and enter into the blessings of his power and love, and to be made rich in his mercy and grace. It has been said that the law indicated to the Jew what the true religion ought to be, and that the prophets told what the religion of their day was not, but that the Psalms express in personal experience what the religion of Jehovah really became to some, and tell of how their faith in God showed itself in true piety and in exalted patriotism.

A young orphan boy of tender years was hired out by an aunt to a barber to learn a trade that he might earn his rice, and another barber on the same street who was a Christian read to him and told him of God's love for him and of how God gave his Son to die that men might be saved. He accepted Jesus as his Savior and was turned out of doors by his employer and by

his aunt, and was told never to come back. He did not know what to do or where to go, but finally went to the foreign missionaries, and asked if they would take him into their home. From the first he felt the call to tell others of Christ, and going with the missionaries as he grew older he would tell the people of the villages that he was a barber, and when they came to have their heads shaved he would use his opportunity to preach the gospel. One day he saw men in line who had sold themselves to work in South America on sugar plantations. They had failed in business, or had suffered some misfortune, and so they accepted a price for so many years' work and gave the money to their families. This Chinese Christian was so moved by the condition of these slaves, that he offered to go with them, but found that the only way he could do so was to sell himself. This he did, and as he worked with the coolies he told them of Jesus, and in his little shack he would read the Bible to them. By selling himself he became Jehovah's angel to those poor Chinamen. Lough Fook it was who was thus called of God, and who asked for a hard task, and did marvelous things through the power of God.

God wants the children in his family to be "Blessed," to possess that true happiness which comes from being rightly related to God and man. The word "Blessed" is plural and might be translated "blessednesses." It seems to say that all things are well with the godly man, that true happiness is within when piety guards the threshold, that to him who loves the law of the Lord there come all blessings, at all times, to the highest degree, and for time and eternity. The happiness of the righteous as contrasted with the wicked is not only the theme of the first Psalm, but is also the golden

thread binding together these pearls and gems and jewels of Judah.

1. Blessed are they who have correct conceptions of Jehovah, who know him as the one true God, who rejoice in his immanence, who have learned that he is approachable, who recognize him as the creator and the controller of all things, who worship him as holy and good and great and compassionate and tender and just and faithful. The Lord is their shepherd and they shall not want satisfaction, rest, quietness, restoration, guidance, comfort, assurance, joy, redemption, satisfaction (Psa. 23). They can bless Jehovah at all times, for the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them, and though their afflictions be many, their God delivereth his children out of them all (Psa. 34). Jehovah's righteousness is as a mountain and his faithfulness reaches to the very clouds, and under his mercy and lovingkindness do the needy take refuge as do the young under the wings of the mother bird (Psa. 36). The Lord has been their dwelling place in one generation after another, and man needs to so number his days as to apply his heart unto wisdom (Psa. 90).

The astronomer sees how excellent Jehovah's name is, whose glory is beyond that of the heavens, and whose power and wisdom and greatness are displayed by the firmament day after day (Psa. 8, 19). The earth is the Lord's, the world and all that is therein (Psa. 24), and those who worship should come in the beauty of holiness, for all the waters of the sea and all the tenants of the land proclaim him king (Psa. 29). Praise is comely for individuals and for nations (Psa. 33), and they should be still before God, they should remember that he is their refuge and their

strength, that he is the Lord of hosts, but is also the God of even such an one as Jacob (Psa. 46).

The pleasure of such a God is not in mere ceremonies, but in sincerity and in obedience (Psa. 50). He who clothes the valley and gives life and fruitfulness to the seed, he who controls the sea and blesses the soil should be loved by his creatures (Psa. 65), and every vow that any man has made should be fully kept (Psa. 66, 76, 77). The Lord reigneth, true worship should be found in his house, the people should come before his presence with singing, and they should hate evil and should rejoice at the remembrance of his holiness (Psa. 93, 95, 97, 99).

Like as a father loves and cares for his own, aye even more does the true God shew mercy to his children and forgive their iniquities (Psa. 103, 104). The redeemed of the Lord should proclaim their deliverance and should offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving (Psa. 107). Holy and reverend is his name, and he should be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, even from this time forth and forever more (Psa. 111, 113, 115). To those who thus worship he will give protection while they sleep, and will preserve them from evil (Psa. 121); even though they be in the uttermost part of the earth his hand will lead and the darkness itself shall be light about them (Psa. 139). For his mercy, for his providence, for his goodness, for his trust in man, everything that hath breath should praise the Lord (Psa. 144, 147, 150).

How different was Jehovah from the heathen gods of the surrounding nations! How wonderful that in the midst of such deities of cruelty and lust, that in the very lands where there were rival idols of land and sea, of air and seasons, of sun and storm, there should

be so clear and so exalted a revelation of the one true and holy God! As we look back across the centuries and study anew the history of the nations, we find that the teachings concerning Jehovah as found in the Psalms stand out clearly and alone over the wrecks of time.

Some years ago when Jacksonville, Florida, was visited by a terrible holocaust the only thing left standing in all that vast area of smoking ruins was the Confederate monument, which still stands just across from the Windsor Hotel and in the midst of a new and more beautiful and more abiding wealth of architecture. The Psalms and their theology from generation to generation have withstood all of the vicissitudes and experiences of mankind, and even in the beauty and strength and finality of the New Testament they hold their place.

Happy, blessed is the soul that knows the true God, and in every circumstance of life knows the secret of orientation. The carrier pigeon possesses this characteristic, the bee with its load of honey takes the straightest and nearest way home, the cat finds its way back to its place of abode. He who has become oriented to God may be entrapped, may fall into the hands of the enemy, may go far afield in search of the sweets of life, but when he escapes, when he gets his bearings, when he comes to himself, he will arise and go to his Father. If he has sinned he will confess, and if he has prospered he will honor Jehovah with all of his treasures of body and mind and soul. Praise ye the Lord!

2. Blessed are they who find the God of providence in the events of history. The Maschil of Asaph in Psalm 78 calls upon the people of Israel to give ear

while he opens his mouth in a parable, and while he reviews for them their history, and while he reminds them of God's great mercies and of how they had provoked him by their sins. Asaph goes over the events from Moses to David, recalling God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the provision made for them in the wilderness, the disasters which came to their enemies, and the possession of the land of promise. He shows them how ungrateful they were, how they murmured against God, how they insulted the Lord with their idolatries and their pretended repentance. God had justly punished them, had graciously spared them, even in the face of their constant and renewed provocation, and was still seeking to lead them in the way of holiness and happiness.

Again in Psalm 105 we have other reminders of Jehovah's dealings with Israel. He had been faithful to the covenant with Abraham, and in all of their wanderings and apostacies he had been the God of providence. In the history of Joseph we see that Jehovah was able to overrule the wrongs of men to the preservation of his own. The plagues which they saw visited upon Egypt in their deliverance, their flight from bondage, their passage through the sea, the incidents of their years of wandering, their experience under the Judges, their present condition, all are only guide posts which point the way to God. "O give thanks unto the Lord, make known his deeds among the people!"

They had provoked Jehovah at the Red Sea, and had hardly passed the waters which covered their enemies, when they lusted exceeding in the wilderness and vexed the Lord who had saved them from bondage. Mutiny against Moses, the divinely chosen leader, was

punished faithfully; and yet soon after that they made a calf of gold and worshiped the molten image. They often complained of the very thing which was a blessing from the Lord, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and went a whoring after evil, but Jehovah remembered his covenant and corrected them with the oppression of their enemies and delivered them by captivity of body from the slavery of sin (Psa. 106).

Talmadge, contemplating this boundless forbearance of the God of providence, once said, "Oh, this mercy of God! I am told that it is an ocean. Then I place on it four swift-sailing crafts with compass and charts and choice rigging and skilful navigators, and I tell them to launch away for me and discover the extent of this ocean. That craft puts out in one direction and sails to the north, this to the south, this to the east, and this to the west. They crowd on all their canvas and sail ten thousand years, and one day come up the harbor of heaven, and I shout to them from the beach, 'Have you found the shore?' They answer, 'No shore to God's mercy.' Swift angels despatched from the throne attempt to go across it. For a million years they fly and fly; but they come back and fold their wings at the foot of the throne, and cry, 'No shore! No shore to God's mercy!'"

Wellington found the God of mercy and providence even at Waterloo, and thanked Jehovah that his finger was upon him and that victory had come. When he rode among the wounded and dying, when he saw the awful carnage and wept over the terrible suffering, and when he more fully realized the terrible price paid for unholy ambition, he gave expression to his trust in God. "It is in such trying hours that man feels his

frail mortality, instinctively turns to God, and referring his actions to the will of him who guides and governs all things, says with reverence, 'The finger of providence was on me.'" "O give thanks unto the Lord for his mercy endureth forever."

3. Blessed are they who learn the holier lessons of human experience. The happy man will not be found among those who walk or stand or sit in the company of the wicked (Psa. 1). He will not take pleasure in wickedness but will come to God's house and will worship toward his holy temple (Psa. 5). When enemies make a pit for his feet, they fall into the ditch which they have made, and their mischief returns upon their own head (Psa. 7). When the godly were destitute of human comfort the Lord supplied the need (Psa. 12); when the temptations of the filthy beset him, he saw that only the fool would deny God a place in his heart (Psa. 14); when he beheld the selfishness and greed and envy of the sinning, he turned to the tabernacle, and saw the character of those who could never be moved (Psa. 15); when sorrow and affliction and anxiety came, he prayed the Lord to shew the right way and guide him in the paths of truth and keep his soul and deliver him (Psa. 25); when grievous sin and even bloodshed were upon his soul, so that he had no rest day or night, he confessed his terrible wrong, and said "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa. 32).

When evil doers seemed to prosper beyond the righteous, he reminded himself that evil doers will soon be cut off; that though the wicked may spread himself like a green bay tree, he will have a brief and unhappy career, while the steps of the good man will be ordered of the Lord and God will delight in his way and the

end of that man shall be peace (Psa. 37). The mighty man, who boasts himself in mischief and who presumes upon the goodness of God, will be plucked up from among the living, will be rooted out of the place of his abode, and will be destroyed forever (Psa. 52).

The proud man had also been observed by the writers of the Psalms, and had been warned not to deal foolishly, for in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture, and he poureth out the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them (Psa. 75). Tyranny and impiety seemingly join hands in advancing those who afflict God's heritage, who slay the widow and the fatherless and the stranger. They deceive themselves by saying that the Lord shall not see or care, for Jehovah only waits until the pit be digged for the wicked and until the harvest is ready when he shall bring upon them their own iniquity (Psa. 94). Godliness has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come, and in every condition there arises light in the darkness. He who is righteous shall not be moved, but shall be in everlasting remembrance, and shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord (Psa. 112).

A boy was invited by the owner of an apple orchard to come inside and get some fruit. He said no, that he did not want any. The owner insisted, and said the fruit was good and he would enjoy it. The boy replied that the fruit was sour, and that he knew because he had tried it as he had passed outside. The owner said, "I purposely put sour fruit around the border on the outside. The good fruit is deeper into the orchard." This is certainly true of the blessings of piety. They

grow sweeter the deeper in we go, and around the border and just outside they seem to the passer-by to be sour and unattractive.

In the experiences which make for human character, in the dangers and vanities and possibilities of life, in the hopes based upon truth and righteousness and God, in the struggles due to wrong and injustice and falsity and sin, in the triumphs of righteousness through the grace of God, we shall never fail to find in the Psalms just what our hearts need. As the Chicago river now has for its cleansing all of the fresh waters of Lake Michigan, so does the child of God find all of the cleansing and invigorating mercy and grace and power of God at his disposal when the filthy current of sin is turned back upon its source.

4. Blessed are they who lift their hearts in devotion to God, who know real sorrow for sin, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who have found safety with the Lord in times of danger, who have hoped on in spite of doubt and dejection, whose faith has not been dimmed by affliction, whose deliverance from persecution has been definite and repeated, whose penitence has brought them to God in sorrow over wrong in heart and life, whose intercession has been marked by sincerity and persistence, whose longing for worship has led them regularly to the house of the Lord, and who would rather have the humblest place there than to recline on the most luxurious couches in the abodes of wickedness.

At the close of a service, a little girl presented the evangelist with a bouquet of flowers, and he asked why she had brought to him these first fruits of the springtime. She frankly but timidly made reply, "Because I love you." He then asked, "Do you at times bring

such gifts of love to Jesus?" The little child with a smile said, "I give myself to him." In the Psalms we find that the writer in almost every one of them speaks beautifully and clearly of the joys of devotion and of worship to those who give themselves to God.

The Lord heard out of his holy hill (Psa. 3), and accepted the sacrifices of righteousness (Psa. 4). Jehovah heard the supplication of his servant in his sickness (Psa. 6), and David is encouraged to trust and not be afraid because the Lord is in his holy temple (Psa. 11). He sees the multiplying sorrows of those who hasten after another god and he decides that he will never offer their sacrifices of blood and will never take up their names into his lips (Psa. 16). He will lift up his soul unto the Lord, the God of his salvation (Psa. 25), for the Lord is his light and deliverance (Psa. 27), and will hear his supplication and will save his anointed (Psa. 28), will see to it that his servant is not put to shame (Psa. 31), and will deliver him out of all trouble (Psa. 54).

The Lord is a strong tower to those who love him (Psa. 61), and the child of God may be confident that he will not be put to confusion (Psa. 71). Among all of the gods there is none like unto Jehovah, worthy of devotion and of worship (Psa. 86); he shall stand at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn him (Psa. 109); his word hid in the heart will keep from sin and will enable the young man to cleanse his way (Psa. 119); every mercy that can be named is from Jehovah, and we should give thanks unto him and worship him for he is good and his mercy endureth forever (Psa. 136); and happy indeed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God (Psa. 146).

In 1895 a vote was taken in the senior class at Amherst, as to which of their number would probably become best known in the affairs of the nation. The result was that eighty per cent of the class voted for the man whose scholarship had been most marked. They made the mistake so many others make of supposing that the most brilliant scholar is the greatest man. In the class was one of whom it was said by another, "I notice that he believes he has a duty, does it loyally day by day, and keeps his eye on the horizon. We shall hear from him." This plodder and dependable man received the vote of the brilliant scholar, and that was the only vote given him by the class, and the man who received this vote as an expression of confidence as to his future was Mr. Calvin Coolidge. Men who move and shape the world are men of conviction and character.

The Portland lighthouse standing far out to sea, warns and invites the ships as they approach the Portland harbor. It is a fixed light, and shows its white clear light in one direction, but flashes red toward every other approach. If a vessel is coming from a wrong direction the Portland light shows danger, but if the boat is sailing the way of safety then there is a white and gleaming course made plain and clear. David and the Psalms say that God's laws are fixed laws, and that they flash red for those who are sailing toward the rocks, but they offer guidance and safety and a protected harbor to those who rightly relate themselves to Jehovah.

In the busy whirl of the busy world, with the many voices and noises about us, it is oftentimes difficult to hear God's messages from above. We need to go into the telephone booth and close the door, and having

looked into the directory of the Psalms, and having gotten the correct number, take down the receiver and talk with the Lord and let him speak to us. The place of worship when the people of God are waiting upon him, the message in song and in sermon, are always worth while and bring their own peculiar and essential blessings, but the secret place is the telephone booth where we can speak most freely and hear most distinctly.

5. Blessed are they who find delight in thanksgiving, and who recognize and appreciate the individual mercies, who see and are grateful for the national strength and prosperity, who know truly the soul's hope of eternity and deliverance from hell, who bless the Lord for all of his benefits, who rejoice in any likeness to God, and who anticipate full satisfaction only when they awake in his likeness (Psa. 33, 16, 103, 17). Did ever mortal pen write down such expressions of true gratitude and thanksgiving as are found in the Psalms, and can we read them over without having our hearts say, "Praise ye the Lord," (Psa. 150), "Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord"? (Psa. 135).

We are called upon to come and sing unto the Lord, to make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation (Psa. 95); to sing unto the Lord a new song because he hath done marvelous things, to praise him with the voice of a psalm and with the harp and with trumpets and the sound of cornet (Psa. 98); to bring hither the timbrel and the pleasant harp and the psaltery (Psa. 81); to call upon our souls and all that is within us to bless his holy name and to forget not all his benefits (Psa. 103).

David praised the Lord for executing judgment, for

maintaining the right, for judging the world in righteousness (Psa. 9); he wrote a song of gratitude for delivering him out of the hands of his enemies (Psa. 18); he gave expression to Jehovah of his gratitude because the Lord did not despise nor abhor those who were afflicted, because he considered the meek, and because of confidence in God's grace (Psa. 22). The Psalmist is filled with joy at the remembrance of God's holiness (Psa. 30); and he can never cease to be thankful that he was brought up out of an horrible pit, that his feet were taken from the miry clay and placed upon a rock, that his goings were established and a new song put into his mouth (Psa. 40).

With praise our Lord is well pleased when it is with the whole heart (Psa. 138), and every day is not too often for such expressions of gratitude (Psa. 145). A young man, who saved a drowning boy from the icy waters of the river, was given a medal in recognition of the long and terrible struggle with ice and waves and weakness. The newspapers said much about the brave deed, and a public celebration was held to do honor to the rescuer and to present him with a medal and with a generous purse and with an illuminated address. The minister presented the medal, and the mayor read the address and presented the purse. As the meeting was closing the little lad came to the platform and put his arms about the man's neck and kissed him. Holding the boy in his arms, the man said, "I am grateful for the medal and the purse and the address you have given me, but the thing I prize above all else is this boy's gratitude." Our God, David's God, has preserved and handed down to us the expressions of praise and thanksgiving in the Psalms. Surely they must be acceptable to him,

and surely he will be pleased if we too shall show our gratitude for his many mercies toward us.

6. Blessed are they who rejoice in the coming of the King, the Messiah, who love to dwell upon his birth, his life, his principles, his mission, who tremble at his betrayal, and who share in his agony and his death and his triumph and his enthronement and his intercession and his inheritance. The kings of the earth may unite to throw off his yoke, but they will be held in derision. God will maintain his decree concerning his Son, and the mighty ones of earth are urged to seek the favor of the Son while they may (Psa. 2). Peter tells us in Acts 2 : 25-27 that David foresaw the Lord and rejoiced in him and predicted his resurrection (Psa. 16). This is indeed a golden psalm, more to be valued than much fine gold, because it speaks so plainly of the Savior, the Christ.

In Psalm 22 the writer is evidently enduring some almost unbearable trial, and he calls upon God to help and to deliver him, and believes that Jehovah will give the victory. The quotations from this Psalm in the New Testament show that the writer moved by the Holy Spirit was uttering what was to be true of the Messiah in his sufferings and in his death. It is a description which only the divine mind could foresee.

David probably wrote Psalm 40 upon the occasion of deliverance from some grave danger, but in doing so he at the same time prophesied as to the sufferings of Christ and the redemption which was to come through him. In Psalm 45 the glory of the king is portrayed when he was making ready for his marriage, and the Holy Spirit uses it to describe the mystical marriage between Christ and his church, and tells of the excellence of his person, the glories of his victories, the

justice of his government, the splendor of his court, the beauty of his bride, the solemnity of the union, and the happy issue of the marriage in all generations.

The glory of Zion's King, the God of our salvation is given in Psalm 68, and the prediction is made that princes shall come out of Egypt and that Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God. Reproach is to break the heart of the Messiah and his enemies are to seemingly triumph over him, and in his agony they will give him gall for meat and will give him vinegar for drink (Psa. 69). Christ's kingdom is described in Psalm 72, though primarily in the mind of the writer it was a description probably of Solomon's reign, for Jesus will indeed judge the people with equity, he shall save the children of the needy, all kings shall fall down before him, he shall redeem the soul from deceit and violence, and his name shall endure forever. Gentiles are to come to the kingdom of Christ (Psa. 96), and the Redeemer is to be the comfort of his children and the terror of his enemies (Psa. 97).

The Messiah is to be not only a king, but is to be also the priest and judge, and the people who serve him are to be an army of volunteers (Psa. 110). In Matt. 21:42 Jesus says, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" (Psa. 118). Expressions concerning God's servants in the Psalms depict the trials and triumphs of Christ. Though these earthly kingdoms and rulers would soon perish, the spiritual kingdom which the writers portrayed would endure forever. The promise that the throne of David should be an everlasting one was

itself a messianic prophecy, and was to be fulfilled in the coming and in the reign of the Messiah who was to be David's son by natural lineage, but was to be at the same time his Savior and Lord.

Captain Thomas Tiplady, in his book, "The Cross at the Front," tells of his visit to the ruins of a church in a desolate village just behind the trenches in Flanders. The roof had fallen in, the floor could not be seen because of the debris which covered it, the walls were pitted with shrapnel, desolation and ruin were in evidence everywhere. He says, "I had walked round three parts of the church, when something suddenly caught my attention and I looked up. The sight startled me, for somehow it had escaped me as I had glanced round the church on entering from the other side. There before me stood a large wooden cross fastened against the wall, and bearing nailed upon it a life sized figure of the Savior. It stood intact—the one thing in the church, undamaged and untouched. The altar had gone, the saints had gone, the roof and the windows had gone, the chairs had gone—all had gone save Jesus only. The worshipers had fled, but he remained. The church was in ruins about him, but he was untouched." David has gone, the temple has gone, Israel is scattered, the Jewish ritual has fallen, but the Messiah, the suffering Servant, the Prophet and Priest and King abides and will abide forever.

Sir John Bowring at Macao in South China saw the wreck of a great church building, which had been destroyed by a terrible typhoon, leaving only the facade and the cross upon its topmost height. The sight so impressed him that he wrote that hymn which will never die:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide."

3: PROVERBS

(1) *Proverbs—The word and the book.*
(2) *Wisdom is right understanding of life.*
(3) *Prosopopeia—Wisdom and folly.*
(4) *True wisdom is the theme of the book.*

I. FOUNDED UPON THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

1 Filial and not servile fear.
2 Heeds not the voice of folly.
3 Chooses the path of righteousness.
4 Realizes the curse of sin.
5 Appreciates the true riches.

II. SHOWS ITSELF IN EVERY PHASE OF LIFE.

1 In reverence for parents.
2 In correct business methods.
3 In proper conduct toward neighbors.
4 In making of a worthy home.
5 In cultivation of personal habits.
6 In good name with the public.

III. PRODUCES HIGHEST TYPE OF CHARACTER.

1 By placing principle above pleasure.
2 By believing that right will triumph.
3 By preferring faithfulness to praise.

IV. RESULTS IN GREATEST EARTHLY HAPPINESS.

1 Courage to do right.

2 Honesty in business and life.

3 Sincerity with God and man.

4 Satisfaction by being our best.

5 Self-control in sobriety and chastity.

6. Virtue and worth and praise and beauty.

Bible—"The price of wisdom is above rubies."

Tennyson—"'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise."

La Rochefoucauld—"Wisdom is to the soul what health is to the body."

Johnson—"In general those parents have the most reverence who most deserve it."

Lavater—"He who can at all times sacrifice pleasure to duty approaches sublimity."

Ruskin—"The proof of a thing's being right is that it has power over the heart."

Colton—"We should not be too niggardly in our praise, for men will do more to support a character than to raise one."

Shakespeare—"Better conquest never cans't thou make than arm thy constant and they nobler parts against giddy, loose suggestions."

Butler—"Virtue is not to be considered in the light of mere innocence, or abstaining from harm; but as the exertion of our faculties in doing of good."

3: PROVERBS

THE WISEST CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

A proverb is a short, pithy, pungent statement of truth. The statement is usually made in such striking language and form that it is easily remembered, for example: "With God go over the sea; without him cross not the threshold"; "Pray to God, and row toward the shore"; "A fool can cast a stone into the sea, but a hundred wise men cannot get it out"; "The sun goes over unclean places, but is not defiled."

God's desire for a family of children has been studied in its beginnings and in its history and in its struggles and failures and victories from Genesis to Esther. In Job we found the theologians persistently and eagerly and honestly seeking to state what we should believe about God, and particularly in his relation to sin and suffering. In the Psalms devout children of Jehovah gave utterance to their soul experiences in their worship. In Proverbs we are to study the philosophy of life, to weigh the good over against the bad, to place trust in the forceps holding it firmly between opposing points of antithesis.

The book of Proverbs is a compilation of the wise sayings of Solomon, Agur, Lemuel and others. In First Kings (4: 29-34) we are told of the fame of Solomon's wisdom, beyond that even of Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and that people came from all the known parts of the earth which had heard of Solomon

that they might for themselves witness examples of his understanding and his largeness of heart. From chapters 1 to 9 is given the praise of wisdom; in chapters 10 to 22 : 16 are quoted the proverbs of Solomon; in 22 : 17 to 24 the sayings of the wise; in 25 to 29 a second collection of the sayings of Solomon; in chapter 30 the words of Agur; in 31 : 1-9 the words of King Lemuel; and in 31 : 10-31 we have an acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet on the virtuous woman.

Wisdom is the right understanding of what life means in its relation to God and man. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In Job (28 : 28) we were told, "Behold the fear of the Lord that it is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." The principal thing is wisdom, therefore get wisdom and live in the light of God's character and truth (Prov. 4 : 17), and constantly seek so to number the brief and fleeting days of life as to apply the heart unto the truest wisdom.

The wisdom of Proverbs is in knowing and following the true philosophy of life. There are two themes, the moral element in the government of the world and the moral duty of man to man. There are two voices that call, the voice of wisdom and the voice of folly. There are two ways open to the children of men, the way of godliness and the way of evil. In the Sermon on the Mount we find as in Proverbs that there is the rock and there is the sand foundation, the broad way and the narrow way, and that the end of one is destruction and the end of the other life and satisfaction.

The morality taught in Proverbs is not that of the heathen, but is in keeping with the character of Jehovah and the faith of Israel. The Lord God is the supreme ruler. His curse is the most terrible penalty that the

sons of men can receive, and his blessing is their highest reward. It is a philosophy of life based upon man's relation to God and not upon mere selfish utilitarianism. The secular is sacred, and sacred and secular are one. Jehovah is in all things, and the religion of his children will lead them to good sense in everyday affairs, will purify their lives, will produce right dealings in business, will hold to the highest ideals in personal and family life, will result in obedience to parents and respect for law and reverence for God.

The style of the Proverbs is that of the Hebrew poetry. They use a parallelism which repeats the thought, or which gives an antithetical statement. An example of the first is seen in the following beautiful quotation from 3:13-16:

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver,
And the profit thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand;
And in her left are riches and honor."

An illustration of parallelism by antithesis is seen in 10:1ff.:

"A wise son maketh a glad father;
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
Treasures of wickedness profit nothing;
But righteousness delivereth from death.
Jehovah will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish;
But he thrusteth away the desire of the wicked."

The prosopopeia of Wisdom in the first chapters of the book is remarkable for its beauty and its strength, and at times Wisdom and Folly are young women, who place before the pilgrim in life's way their respective ideals of life and make their promises to the one who is about to choose. Riddles and enigmas are here given, the purpose of which is to enlist the wit and the ingenuity of the hearer, and in that way inform and interest those whose attention might not otherwise be held. The book altogether is adapted to every class and rank of people, and to every walk in life. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the king and the subject, the parent and the child, the husband and the wife, the Creator and the creature are all in Proverbs.

The wise children are the happy children, and the happy children in Jehovah's family are the ones who have learned that the fear of the Lord is fundamental, and who have a right understanding of what life means in its relation to God and man. Wisdom is not merely a high degree of knowledge. To be wise in the Bible sense is not merely to be prudent and sensible and intelligent, but it is to have also moral and religious enlightenment and understanding. It is to know what is conducive to our highest interests for time and eternity, and to place all other matters in their proper relation to the things of greater and greatest importance. It is next to impossible to analyze such a book as Proverbs, but it is plain that the highest ideal is the one constantly in mind, and every verse of the thirty-one chapters has for its foundation the divine idea of true wisdom.

1. God's children know that true wisdom is founded upon the fear of the Lord (Chapters 1-9).

By fear is meant that form of reverence which casts out terror and dismay and trepidation and apprehension, and intensifies love and confidence and respect and courage. "Filial fear shrinks from sin, servile fear only from the smart of punishment." "Filial fear animates us to avoid whatever would be offensive to our heavenly Father, but servile fear causes us only to care for ourselves, and at its best makes us not better, but only a little more prudent than the devil."

He who is truly wise heeds not the voice of folly, and turns a deaf ear to sinners whose feet run to do all kinds of evil (1, 2). He hears that other voice which crieth without and which says, "Turn you at my reproof." He who is foolish will come to calamity at last, and then when fear comes, when destruction gathers as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish are multiplying, it will be too late to seek wisdom. He hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, and now wisdom can only laugh at his calamity. A Scotchman would not continue his work for a rich farmer, even though it was considered the most desirable place in the community. He was asked if the work was too hard, or the wages too low, or what cause there was for complaint. He replied, "Because there was no roof on the house," and meant that in his religious life the farmer was utterly lacking, and that in such a home there could be no peace or comfort or safety.

He who is wise chooses the path of godliness (3, 4). Length of days and years of life and peace are along this way. Prosperity is found, barns are filled with plenty. The path of the just is as the dawning light, which grows brighter and clearer, until the full day. The godly man knows that out of the heart are the

issues of life, and he is wise enough to keep the heart right. He puts away the things that are perverse, ponders the path for his feet, and turns not to the right hand or to the left. To a man who declined an invitation to religious services, the question was put, "Suppose your mother were here now, what advice would she give you?" The tears came quickly to his eyes, and he tried to conceal them, and brushing them away with his rough hand, he arose and said, "I'll go to the meeting." The voice of the mother, the erring and sinning man knew, was the voice of wisdom, and he was brave enough to obey it.

He who is wise realizes the folly of sin (5-7). He knows that marital infidelity, that lack of care in financial matters, that laziness, that mischief making, that all forms of immorality are sure to bring distress. He knows that a man cannot take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned, and that he who yields to impurity lacks understanding and destroys his own soul.

He who is wise comes more and more to appreciate the true riches of the godly man (8, 9). He has wealth better than rubies, and a possession with which all the things that may be desired are not worthy to be compared. Happy is the man who finds wisdom, for in so doing he finds life and obtains favor of the Lord. Folly says to the one who is being led on by sin, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant," and the poor victim of the deception does not find out until later "that her guests are in the depths of hell."

In the halls of the Inquisition there was the statue of a virgin, a young woman as beautiful as the artist could make her. The white arms were undraped and

extended wide as if ready to receive into their embrace, and a smile made the statue seem to say, "Come and in my arms find happiness." The inquisitors would command the poor deluded and foolish recanter to advance and embrace the "Inquisition Maid," and as the order was obeyed there came from the closing arms of the figure a hundred gleaming knives to end the life of the one who was so unwise as to yield.

It would be as foolish for a farmer to blame the Lord for his own failure to plow and plant, as it is for the sinning man to complain of the justice of God in the processes of the soul. We do not blame the laws of nature for their exactness, and yet they also are the laws of God. We must obey God and resist sin. We must be as wise as a little girl, who when she asked to join a church, was questioned critically by the minister. "Were you a sinner before this change came?" The child replied, "Yes, sir." The preacher then asked, "Well, are you a sinner now?" "Yes, sir." "Then what change is there in you, and what is the difference?" The little girl said, "I don't know just how to explain it, but I was a sinner running after sin, and now I am trying to run away from sin." No wonder they received her, for she was displaying and putting into expression the highest type of the truest wisdom.

2. God's children show that true wisdom manifests itself in every phase of life (10-22). In this division of the Proverbs we have more of the brief, sententious, axiomatic sayings of the wise men. Their observation and experience, and their comments on vital and practical things, make these pithy sentences most valuable. They contrast always the wise and the foolish, the godly and the wicked. They have to do with marriage

and the home, with justice and injustice, with youth and old age, with truth and falsehood, with wealth and poverty, with pleasure and happiness, with gluttony and impurity, with laziness and drunkenness, with time and eternity. The writers of Proverbs are in these chapters constantly assuming that an upright life is the highest proof of true wisdom.

Those who are wise will show themselves so in the relationships of the home (10). A wise son will be the comfort of his parents, and that father and mother are foolishly laying up sorrow for themselves and trouble for others when they fail to rear their children in the fear of the Lord. The children, too, will come to realize that to conduct themselves wisely and well is to show that they are worthy of their parents, and is to bring abiding prosperity and happiness to their own lives. Malice, lying, sloth will bring sorrow to parents and children, and the name of the wicked shall rot; but industry and integrity and instruction in the fear of the Lord will prolong the days, and will leave a memory that is blessed. He who spares the rod in his home shows himself too selfish to undergo the sorrow incident to discipline, and as the proverb says, "hateth his son" instead of really loving him. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beat him with rods, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from hell."

The blessing of the Lord makes a home rich, and adds no sorrow with it. A wise and Christian mother gave some good advice to a young father and mother which has been a source of help in the rearing of children who have become the cause of abiding joy to the parents. She said, "Your own manifestation of conviction and will power will have much to do with

the welfare of the children. If they detect in you a lack of these essentials and find that they can run over you, they will do so and then will lose respect for you." The New Testament tells us that we are not to provoke our children to wrath, that there must not be injustice and tyranny; but there must be discipline, and along with discipline the nurture in the will of the Lord, and the realization that they are under the higher law of the divine commandment.

Wisdom will manifest itself in all business affairs (11-13). A false balance is not only stealing and an injustice to others, but it is an abomination to the Lord. To lie in business is not only to tell a lie and be a liar, but is to violate the law of Jehovah. The worst thing about stealing is being a thief, and the worst thing about lying is not merely that a lie has been told, but that I am the kind of person who is willing to lie. Even if riches be gained temporarily and though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished. Diligence shall be rewarded, but the slothful shall be under tribute. There is that maketh rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. The good man will leave a worth-while inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth which was temporarily gained by the sinner will be laid up for those who proved themselves wise and just.

A man came to his neighbor and asked him to sign a petition for a saloon license to be granted him. The neighbor asked why he was giving up his work as a carpenter to enter the despised business of selling intoxicants. His answer was that he could make more money in the saloon. His friend said, "But do you realize that in the saloon you will be helping to make

drunkards? Suppose that in a year you help five men to be drunkards, and suppose that you keep the saloon for ten years, then you will have helped fifty men to such a life. Think of going to hell and having to meet fifty souls for whose damnation you were in part responsible."

He who is truly wise will carefully seek to be as good a neighbor as he wants others to be toward him (14-16). Fools make a mock at sin, and he who despises his neighbor is sinning. How easy it is to be angry and say things which cause infinite contention and trouble! A kind answer will turn away wrath, and it is better to have even a little with fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. He that is proud in heart will be obnoxious to God as well as to his neighbors, and pride is the sure fore-runner of destruction. Consideration for a poor neighbor is evidence of wisdom, and he who despises and oppresses the poor reproacheth his Maker.

There is with a man now grown a distinct childhood memory of an experience with a neighbor's chickens. This incident left in the son's heart great reverence for his father. All requests had failed to keep the feathered visitors out of the garden, and one day it was decided so to reconstruct the division fence as to make their entrance impossible. The boy remembers that all the way down on her side, the neighbor followed giving full expression to her feelings on the subject, and that the work of reconstruction was continued by the father and was completed without ever once uttering a word in reply. The neighbor was thus rebuked by silence, and was won to real friendship.

In the home making and in the relationship of husband and wife, true wisdom which is based on fear of

the Lord will produce respect and will encourage love and will give peace and happiness and prosperity (17-19). A dry morsel and unity and love and quietness are far better than a house full of dainties with jawing and brawling and contention and discontent. Do not dare reward evil for good, lest evil forever haunt your own life. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. It is a castle, a palace, a home, and he who makes the Lord his dwelling-place will be always safe. A good wife is surely of the Lord, and will insure a home where wisdom reigns, but a jewel in a swine's snout is the wise man's picture of a fair woman who is foolish and who is lacking in discretion.

An obscure and pious woman in the south of England had only one child. She died when the lad was only seven years of age. Fortunately for the boy and for the world the home was one that feared the Lord. In young manhood John Newton went astray, and as an African slave trader he went deep into sin and vice, but in it all his mother's piety and teachings and prayers were never forgotten. His transformed character, his Christian philanthropy, his glorious ministry testify to the wealth of the pious home. It was John Newton who led Claudius Buchanan to Christ, and it was Buchanan's little book "The Star in the East" that attracted Adoniram Judson to a life of Christian missions in the land of Burmah.

Personal habits also reveal the presence or absence of true wisdom (20). Matthew Henry says, "When the wine is in the wit is out," and David Thomas says that strong drink is a great false prophet, "a prophet working busily in every district, under the inspiration of hell." The sluggard will not plow, and so is forced to beg. The drunkard is unfit for society, and yet

claims that drinking is a sociable thing. The man who sells with dishonest weights and measures is personally a thief, and the man who discredits the worth of property by saying "It is naught, it is naught," and does so in order to buy it below the price, is a deceiver. The bread of deceit seems sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. The talebearer by fair speeches will gain the confidence of one person only to carry added stories to others and make mischief. An undutiful child will come to grief, and his lack of reverence for parents will lead to defiance of law and to death, and even a child is known by his doings whether his work be pure and right.

The public life, as well as the personal and private, gives evidence of wisdom or folly (21, 22). This is true of the king and of the subject, of the woman and child and of the man. To do justice is more acceptable to God than sacrifice. A high look is an offence to everybody. The scorner, the boastful, the covetous, the lover of pleasure, the false witness are always a menace to the public. A good name is a rich possession and is a benediction. The generous, the humble, the pure in heart, the diligent in business are the strength of a community. They do not oppress the poor, they do not show partiality to the rich. They manifest in their lives the moral virtues, and they condemn in others the opposite vices. They realize that horses and chariots may be prepared for the day of battle, but that safety is of the Lord. Millions of soldiers and years of planning and perfection of guns cannot win the battle of the Marne, when God and right and a small army of faithful people are on the other side.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but

the end thereof are the ways of death." The prisoner in a gloomy castle on Lake Geneva was told that he was to be free, and was directed down the stairway to the gate of exit. A few steps down into the darkness, and then the stairway was broken, and the deceived prisoner fell to death on the rocks below, and the mangled body was thrown into the lake. Wisdom walks in the light, but folly descends a broken stairway in the castle of sin.

3. God's children prove that true wisdom produces the very highest type of character (23-27). This is summed up in three great statements: (1) They put principle above pleasure (23), (2) they believe that right will triumph (24-26), (3) they prefer faithfulness to praise (27).

Years ago, a Methodist minister with a family of five daughters came to London. His salary was small, but in that Christian home there was something which wealth and social position cannot buy, the training in great Bible principles under the example and precept of a Spirit led mother and father, who lived and worked for others in the name of Christ. The salary rarely ever exceeded one hundred and fifty pounds a year. One daughter did not marry, and gave her life to the parents in the home and to the church and its work. Two of the girls married artists. One of these was Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the great painter, and the other was Sir Edward Poynter who became president of the Royal Academy. Another daughter married John Kipling, and her son was Rudyard Kipling known the world over and whom she named for a lake which she loved. The other daughter of the five became the wife of Alfred Baldwin and the mother of the man who came to be Premier of England. That

child chooses well, who elects to be born in a home where worship and spiritual values have first place.

A town in the West was started on the basis of infidelity, and no church was to be built there, this provision being incorporated in all deeds to property. It was not long until the natural results came. The young people showed such a lack of character and moral foundation, that the citizens became thoroughly alarmed about the situation. It is told that the community became so disagreeable, that immorality was so prevalent, that life was so unsafe, that the young became such a terror to their seniors, as to change the minds of the most outspoken of unbelievers. They began to ask their neighboring towns to send them a preacher and build them a church, or they would all go to ruin. The proximity of churches and schoolhouses is a fine advertisement for property, and is a safeguard to health and prosperity and happiness.

The most poisonous snakes have the most beautiful skins, and the most deceitful and disastrous follies often have the most fascinating appearance. Labor not just to be rich, for riches certainly take to themselves wings. The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and shall be clothed in rags, and he whose eyes behold strange women shall find that their feet take hold on hell. When General Grant was besieging Vicksburg and when a number of officers were together they were invited to join in a "social glass," and all but one accepted. He asked to be excused saying that he never drank. Later General Grant sent for him, and asked if he was the officer who had declined to drink, and he modestly replied that he was. Grant then said, "You are the man I have been looking for to take charge of the Commissary Department." He was ap-

pointed and served there all through the war, and later when General Grant became president and needed a man who could be relied upon for a responsible task, he again chose the man who never drank.

He who believes that right will triumph need not be envious of evil men and will not desire to be with them. A wise man is strong, because he knows he is on the right side, and he does not faint in the day of adversity. He does not fret himself because of the wicked, for there shall be no abiding reward to those who live evil lives. Their candle shall soon be put out. Their calamity shall rise suddenly, the people shall hold them in contempt, and the nations shall abhor them. Even apparent sorrow turns to the good of those who fear the Lord. A fisherman lost in a storm found his way to life and safety by the fire on the shore. It was his own home that was burning. His house was destroyed, but he was saved. The righteous may have sorrows, but the Lord will deliver him out of them all.

The wounds of a friend are faithful, and the man who is truly wise will prefer faithfulness to empty and flattering praise. Even if praise is deserved it is far better to let another man find out the worthy thing and speak of it, than to have the commendation spoken with our own lips. Even open rebuke is better than flattery, and the wise man will not be so obsessed with his own importance as to fail to see the dangers in his way. The simple pass on and are punished, for you may even bray a fool in a mortar yet his foolishness will not depart from him. Truth and character and loyalty and purity are more than praise.

A minister on a crowded boat on the river paid no

attention to the scoffer who sought to make himself obnoxious to the preacher by his blasphemy and his indecent talk. The minister did not raise his eyes from the book he was reading. Finally the man walked over and rudely slapped him on the shoulder and said, "Old fellow, what do you think of these things?" The preacher pointed out across the water to the land and said, "Send out a buzzard over that beautiful landscape with its hills and valleys, its shrubs and flowers, and he will not stop until he finds some loathsome carcass. The buzzard is contented only when feeding on something rotten. How I would hate to be that kind of a bird!" The scoffer for the rest of the journey was known to all on board as the buzzard.

A company of boys were having a snow-ball contest. A good hard ball went astray and made its way through a parlor window. The boys shouted out, "There, you'll catch it now! Run, Bill, run!" They took to their heels, and character was seen in those who ran, and also in the boy who said, "No, I'll not run." On the other hand he started for the house where the window had been broken, rang the bell, told of the accident, that it was he who did the damage, gave his name and his father's name, and promised to have the window repaired. Anybody can throw a rock through a window and sneak on in the night and be always conscious of the meanness of his character, but it is a very different boy who will come back and confess the wrong and do all in his power to make it right.

4. God's children have found that true wisdom has brought to them the highest earthly joys (28-31).

(1) Courage! Here in the very first verse it is stated the wicked flee when no man pursueth, but that the

righteous are bold as a lion. Fear is slavery, and to be a slave is to be unhappy. The poor in his uprightness is far better off than the rich in his perverseness. The wise man will have the courage to do right, courage to be just, to take no advantage, to be poor, and to have no respect of persons.

(2) Honesty! It is better to be poor and upright, than to grow rich with usury and unjust gain. The thief may be wise in his own eyes, but in his haste to be rich he left behind him his most costly possession. In a Sunday school base-ball match the team in the field was one run ahead, and a base-runner crossed the home-plate bringing the score to a tie, but the umpire said, "Out." Contention arose, for this was the last game of the series and the season's cup was in the balance. The umpire said, "I will leave it to Russell." He was the catcher, and a lie would have meant the winning of the game and of the cup. "No, I didn't touch him," he said. His honesty was saved and strengthened, and the game and cup were both won in the inning which followed.

(3) Sincerity! He who covers his sins shall not prosper, and pride of heart is sure to bring a snare. Treachery is folly, and the fear of man bringeth a snare, but they that are genuine and true and trust in the Lord shall be safe. One of our American preachers tells of a young mother left with her child in her western cabin, the husband being called away. That night she prayed, "Lord keep this child and me. Watch over our cabin this night, I beseech thee, and let no harm come to us. If there be those abroad who wish us ill, bring them to a better mind. The Lord have mercy upon all wanderers, upon all those who do deeds of violence. Bring them to thyself to par-

don, and to heaven." The ruffian who was in hiding was won by the prayer, and said to the mother, "No harm will come to you and your child this night. Pray for me." Other prayers for him were answered, and in later years he became a gospel minister.

(4) Satisfaction! Agur confesses his lack of understanding until he found the wisdom of Jehovah, and then he came to see that the best thing for him was "neither poverty nor riches." He did not want to have anything that would take him from the satisfaction which was to be found in serving the Lord. He observed the wonders of nature and the ways of birds and beasts and insects, and concluded that if all these found themselves in doing the creator's will how much more would that be true of those who were made in the image of God. If the Lord has given such wisdom to insects, how much the more will he be ready to do even more for us! If God commends the right use of the instincts among beasts, surely he will be pleased when we make the best use of the gifts which he has bestowed upon us, and we shall find the greatest satisfaction possible for our hearts.

(5) Self-control! Chastity and sobriety were prominent in the counsel given to the king by his mother. The very name she gave him meant "dedicated to God," and her counsel was in keeping with his name. The king in his rule in the state, and the woman in her rule in the home, both need to have the mastery of self. The highest psychology and the best physiology as well as the best religion are all represented in the doctrine of self-control. A half dozen men were assembled in a hotel, and one of them was accompanied by his son. Drinks were suggested and as the waiter took the orders he came to the boy of sixteen, and asked "What

will you have, sir?" After a moment's pause the boy said, "I'll take whatever father takes." The father was accustomed to take whiskey, but when his time came to order, he said very firmly, "I'll take a lemonade."

How we do need the larger vision! How poor we are, because we possess so little of what really belongs to us! A mother weeps because the loss of her wealth keeps her boy from a certain school set, and then comes to see that her financial straits saved her son from associations and sins which were fatal to the others from whom he became separated. An old negro man, who came into possession of two thousand dollars, was so unused to such riches that he did not know what to do with them, and said as he looked at the pile of money, "Dat's too much money fuh me, white man. Jess you gim' me a dollar and a qua'ter, boss, and you take de ress and keep it fuh me. I doan know what to do wid all dat money." The washerwoman, "Aunt Hannah," had passed through a great bereavement, and one of Job's comforters said to her, in view of the loss of the other bread-winner of the family, "Suppose, Aunt Hannah, your health should fail, what would you do for something to eat?" Her reply was, "I would jess set myself down in my easy chair an' trus' de Lawd." When asked what she meant by her "easy chair", it developed that she was talking of God's promise to make all things work together for good to them that love him and are called according to his purpose.

The famous Dr. Hodge tells that following the reign of terror in France when infidelity was so prevalent there was organized in New York a "Druidical Society," which met to ridicule Christianity and to use

every means for uprooting and destroying the faith of the people. "Blind Palmer" was the high priest, and their exercises were infamous and blasphemous to the extreme. At one meeting they burned a Bible, baptized a cat, and in a mock celebration administered "sacrament" to a dog. In the evening the one who was in charge of this sacrilege was attacked with a violent disease, his eyeballs became inflamed and protruded from their sockets, his tongue was swollen and useless, and he died before morning in great bodily and mental agony. Another died in the bed that same night, and was found the next morning. Four others were dead in three days, and within five years from the organization of the society thirty-six of the charter members had met with unnatural deaths. Eight were shot, seven were hanged, two starved to death, five committed suicide, three died in accidents, seven were drowned, one was frozen to death, one died of an attack which was not explained, and one was found dead in bed. He is foolish who knows no fear. He is lacking in ordinary sense who will knowingly walk into the fiery death, who will wilfully grasp a live wire, who will stand on the track and pit his strength against that of a mighty train. "Fools make a mock at sin."

(6) Virtue! Surely it would be impossible to add to the beauty of this pen portrait of a worthy woman. In proportion as it is realized, to that same degree will the women of our land be virtuous and strong and a blessing to the civil and religious welfare of our people. These last twenty-two verses are an acrostic, each line beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There is nothing light or unworthy to be found in this description. She is industrious, she takes pains and pleasure in her home, she is careful to make good use of

her time, she is prudent in her management, she is charitable to the poor, she is discreet and obliging, and best of all she fears the Lord. She has the consciousness of character and virtue and integrity, she deals honorably with all, she is a blessing to her own loved ones, she enjoys the good opinion of her neighbors, and those who know her best arise up and call her blessed. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

In summing up the teachings of Proverbs we recall the man who represented himself as working in one of two mines. One mine was very prosperous. The other was just the reverse. The work was hard and the pay was poor. One man who had given his time and energy to work in the poor mine came on pay day to the owner of the one that was prosperous. He was asked, "Have you not been working at the other mine?" His reply was, "Yes, but I like your pay the best." The man who gives his time to sin cannot expect the pay of the righteous.

A mother came to a college town to visit her son, and found on the wall in his room pictures of actresses and prize fighters and others of a like character. She made no comment, but she brought a copy of Hoffman's Christ and hung it up in a vacant space in her boy's room. Some months later she returned to make a second visit, and on entering the room found all of the pictures gone except the one she had placed there. She asked her son why he had removed the other pictures, and he said, "Why, mother, I could not have them there and his face among them." True wisdom is the right understanding of what life means in its relation to God and man. He who hangs such wisdom up in his heart will surely drive out the evils

against which the wise men have written in the book of Proverbs.

A colporteur came one day into a village offering Bibles for sale. He had already sold quite a number and among them a large family Bible before the priest came to the market place. Jerking the large family edition from the buyer's hand, the priest threw it away, and said, "These books shall never enter my parish." The people were stirred up and joined in driving the colporteur away. Some weeks afterward the seller of Bibles came that way again, and when asked if he were not the same man who had been driven out, he expected to be mistreated as before. He was surprised to find that the people had been hoping and watching for his return. A shopkeeper, seeing the big Bible lying in the ditch where the priest had thrown it, decided he could make use of the paper, and carried it to his store, and tore out leaf after leaf in which to wrap the small purchases of sugar and rice and salt. The people read the leaves, and began to talk about the things they found, and now the whole village was eager to hear the man whom they had persecuted. God can take even the wrath of man and turn it to his praise and to the spread of the truth.

We need an old-time revival of righteousness such as is given in these Old Testament books. We need the clean, high ideal put before us in Proverbs. We need these recurring revivals.

"Do your revivals last?" This inquiry was asked of a well known evangelist, and his reply was in the form of a question, "Do your oaths last?" Revivals are not abnormal. They are normal, natural. They are to be expected and to be desired. They are necessary. A revival is the requickening of that which is

already alive. The showers which fell upon the thirsty soil during the past season have not been lost, and though the fields may now be dry again the springs, the streams, the trees, the fruits, the crops, and the very necessities and comforts and luxuries of life, are the results of the showers and the seasons which came with their needed and recurring blessings.

To be opposed to revivals would be to cling to winter's snow and ice and cold, and to resist the coming of spring with its revival of life and power and beauty; it would be to welcome ignorance rather than a renaissance from medieval darkness to the modern awakening in letters and art; it would be to prefer an endless night rather than the coming of a glorious day; it would be to prefer sickness and suffering and weakness instead of returning health and strength; it would be to choose slavery and bondage instead of freedom and progress; it would be to prefer indifference and lethargy and doubt rather than the joy of salvation and the blessing of service. Many good people are opposed to revivals, because in some cases Christian workers have seemingly thought it necessary to cheapen the gospel in order to get a hearing. The vulgar story, the insinuating suggestion, the coarse language, the loud dress, the eccentric conduct, the irreverent attitude, the unsympathetic spirit, the trimming of truth have given many good people a deep-seated prejudice against revival meetings.

4: ECCLESIASTES

(1) *What is the meaning of life?*
(2) *How may we make the best of it?*
(3) *The teaching of Ecclesiastes.*

I. THE PREACHER'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

1 The ceaseless grind of toil.
2 The brevity of life at best.
3 The repetition of seasons and experiences.
4 The lack of satisfaction in it all.

II. A MORE THOROUGH INVESTIGATION.

1 Three general classes of people.
2 Those who seek mirth and folly.
3 Those who desire learning.
4 Those who pursue wealth and business.

III. SOME SEARCHING QUESTIONS WHICH ARISE.

1 Why these recurring seasons and experiences?
2 Why oppression and struggle and misery?
3 Why do material things so master people?

IV. FOUR IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS.

1 Self-mastery is most desirable.
2 True wisdom takes God into account.
3 Mankind at best is weak and frail.
4 Life offers great opportunities.

V. THREE INEVITABLE CONCLUSIONS.

1 Seek God early that life may be at its best.

2 Dream of old age and live toward that.

3 Fear God and keep his commandments.

Bible—"What is your life?"

Swift—"May you live all the days of your life."

Russell—"Live virtuously and you cannot die too soon, nor live too long."

Chamfort—"There are well-dressed follies, as there are well-clothed fools."

Bias—"The greatest misfortune at all is not to be able to bear misfortune."

Plutarch—"Wisdom is neither gold, nor silver, nor fame, nor wealth, nor health, nor strength, nor beauty."

Spencer—"In the supremacy of self-control consists one of the perfections of the ideal man."

Pythagoras—"Wealth is a weak anchor, and glory cannot support a man; this is the law of God, that virtue only is firm, and cannot be shaken by tempest."

Hecker—"Religion is the answer to that cry of reason which nothing can silence, that aspiration of the soul which no created thing can meet, that want of the heart which all creation cannot supply."

4: ECCLESIASTES

or

THE MEANING OF LIFE AS SEEN BY A PREACHER IN THE FAMILY

What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? What should we be and do? How may we rightly understand our existence? For the children in God's family the answers of the Bible to these questions are altogether satisfactory, and the book of Ecclesiastes is given at the opportune time in the Book of Books. We have seen God's plan and its beginnings and its history and its lessons, and we know now how essential religion is to the full realization of our Father's desire for us. Job told us of the character of God, and in the Psalms we were given helps to the proper worship of Jehovah. Proverbs gave us the definition and application of wisdom, and how to properly relate ourselves to God and man, and now Ecclesiastes in its two hundred and twenty-two verses places before us the right understanding of the meaning of life.

Someone tells the story of a ship which had been driven from its course and wrecked upon a desert island, far from the lanes of travel over the seas. The passengers were imprisoned by the boundless waters, and there was no possibility of escape, but they found themselves in a delightful climate, and with seed and with everything needed to till the rich soil and to

make a happy abiding place. An exploring party reported the discovery of gold on the island, and all of the party gave themselves to gathering the rich yellow metal. Through the spring months they continued to gather gold, but not a field had been tilled or planted, and when summer came there were no harvests to be gathered. Meantime their store of seed grain was being consumed while their wealth was increasing, and at last they began to realize how useless gold would be when famine was staring them in the face.

They hurriedly conferred together, and began felling the trees, digging up the stumps and roots, tilling the soil and sowing the seed, but it was too late. Winter was upon them. The seed rotted in the ground, and they died of want in the midst of their treasures of gold. The Bible reveals to us that our life on this little island in the ocean of space may end like that, and Ecclesiastes is telling us that we must not spend the seasons in amassing that which is useless without the living seed and its repeated harvests. The winter of death must come, and it will be folly indeed if that time overtakes us and finds us destitute of the bread of life. Truly, as Arnot who gives this story says, Ecclesiastes teaches us to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and then all else worth the while will be added unto us.

Life is wonderful, and it is mysterious, but what joys may we find in it and how much we may make out of it, if we accept it as a gift from God and realize that we are to make a life and not merely to accumulate wealth. "Life is the gift of God and is divine." "That man lives twice who lives the first life well." "He that lives to live forever never fears dying." "The truest end of life is to know the life that never ends."

"That life is long that answers life's great end." "Life is a crucible. We are thrown into it and tried." "Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal."

What is our conclusion as to how to make the best of this life? We have thought, we have read, we have studied. We have before us the facts and the theories, the ideals and the difficulties. What solution have we found? Ecclesiastes faces this question, weighs the evidence, considers the facts, and says that this world and that to come must be joined together, that man is incomplete and a failure without God. Surely we shall be glad to follow the wise man in his processes of thought, and see if we can join with him in his final conclusions.

Benjamin Franklin grew up in the belief that secondary causes and general laws are sufficient to account for everything that happens, and that God had nothing to do with human history except to give the general laws under which history is made. While in France, as the American envoy, he was in an atmosphere favorable to his deistic beliefs and in an environment far from devout and spiritual. Yet we are told that Franklin declared his views changed by the American War for Independence, that the story of the revolution could not be accounted for by the operation of secondary causes, and that he became satisfied "of the active participation of God in human history." Not only is this true of nations, but it is also true of individuals, and happy is he who as a child of God knows in whom he has believed.

1. The book of Ecclesiastes in chapter one presents a general survey of life, and the writer gives us the first impressions of a thoughtful observer (1:1-18). It is an untried path which he treads, and the first

look at the surroundings is not pleasing and is far from satisfactory. Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, all is vanity. Everything he sees is but toil, ceaseless toil, and moves in one cycle of constant grind. People rise and eat and toil, and eat and sleep and toil. They are as the hands of the clock which move from minute to minute, and from hour to hour, and are ceaselessly coming back to the place whence they started. They are restless and going, but never get away from the ceaseless round.

Brevity is another of the first impressions. Life is not only one of constant labor, but is brief and passing. One generation lives, passes away and is soon forgotten, while another is taking its place and is moving on just as did the other generation which preceded it. The flutter-wheel hurries around again and again and on and on. The preacher says life is toil, life is brief, life is repetition. The sun rises and sets, the winds perform their circuit, the seasons come again, the rivers run into the sea, but the sea is not full for the clouds carry the water back to the rivers.

Then too there is naught that seems satisfying. The eye is not content with seeing, and the ear is never content with hearing. The people press eagerly on, but curiosity is never ready to say, "It is enough." It is the idea of Dante that hell will be to keep forever doing the things which never satisfy. It is the story of the wages of sin as recorded everywhere in the history of mankind, telling of the vanity of toil with its early rising and incessant labor and anxiety for the things which perish with their using.

The flutter-wheel we made when we were children turned uselessly around as the stream went on its way. The repetition, and the seeming vanity of life was

to the writer of Ecclesiastes as the follies of war. A curtain of fire is thrown down, and another line of men assisted by all the deviltries of battle plunge ahead only to be butchered and to leave homes desolate and hearts bleeding. The culture of years and the poise of experience are lost. All that we think we have gained has gone to flinders, and the preacher says, "What is the use?" "What is there worth while?" "Man is as much a pagan as ever." "He has made no progress, and is back again to the savage state when the wheel turns once more."

Come to the morgue in one of our great cities, and see there in one day seventy-four poor bodies with the label on them "Unidentified." Here they are as driftwood, with no more judgment than to drink and carouse and sin, and at last to be picked up in the alleys and on the river and lake fronts and in the parks. The callous attendants at the morgue say "booze," "bums." The poor and friendless and unnamed bodies are put into the pine boxes which have been grudgingly provided, and these worn-out hulks of ships that pass in the night are sent out to the potter's field. Somebody's boy, somebody's daughter, and how vain and full of disappointment life has been.

These observations have so impressed the preacher, that he determines to look more closely, to study more fully, and to understand if possible what it all means. So he says, "I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly." Fortunate indeed are we to have the written statement of Ecclesiastes concerning the earnest and exhaustive search. The word Ecclesiastes means "preacher," and a deep religious content and purpose are everywhere felt, and we shall see that the emptiness and the nothingness of earthly

matters make all the more impressive the conclusions reached.

2. A thorough investigation follows in which closer and fuller study are given to the facts (2:1-26). The preacher finds that aside from religion the people are in three general classes, those given to mirth or pleasure or folly, those intent upon learning or the wisdom of this world, and those who seek the amassing of wealth. He keeps in mind his first impressions, and now seeks to discover whether this general early survey is correct.

The son of David, king in Jerusalem, said, "Go to now I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure." He gave himself to laughter, to wine, to folly, endeavoring to see what was good for the sons of men. He made great works, he built houses, he planted vineyards, he had gardens and orchards and fruits. He possessed men servants and maidens, and laid claim to great possessions of lands and cattle and silver and gold and the peculiar treasure of kings. He collected singers, both men and women, and all sorts of musical instruments, and nothing was kept back which might bring him pleasure; and yet he must say that it was all to no profit. It was as if he had revelled in gratifying every whim, had tried every playground offered by Epicurus, had entered every place of folly the underworld of sensuality had to offer, and then was ready to say, "It is all to no profit; there is no advantage gained; it is absolutely devoid of any real satisfaction."

Then he turned to behold learning, and said, "I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness." He saw that the man of learning did have eyes in his head, but the fool walked in darkness.

He came to realize, however, that books can no more satisfy man's highest nature than music and pictures can quiet the gnawings of hunger. All the learning, all the books, all the wisdom of the doctors cannot keep men alive, and the learned man dies as does the fool.

It is equally true with business, with riches, with possessions and prosperity. All he acquired had to be left to the one who came after him, and "who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" Drudgery which takes all of the hours of the day, and cares which disturb and take away sleep, and possessions which must be left to others do not take away grief and sorrow and do not bring rest and peace. Goethe said, "They have called me a child of fortune, nor have I any wish to complain of the course of my life. Yet it has been nothing but labor and sorrow, and I may truly say that in seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of true comfort. It was the constant rolling of the stone that was always to be lifted anew."

Lord Chesterfield once said, "I have recently read Solomon with a kind of sympathetic feeling. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not as wise as he; but now I am old enough to feel the truth of the reflection, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'" William Pitt, the favorite of king and people, who died of a broken heart, according to Wilberforce said as he came to the end of the way, "I fear I have neglected prayer too much to make it available on a death bed." Sheridan wrote in his old age, after having gained flattering distinctions, "I am absolutely undone and broken hearted."

Carlyle, in his description of the death of Louis XV, said that the courtiers awaited with impatience the

passing away of the king whose life had been so corrupt and so vile, and whose last moments were unpitied as he lay breathing out his last upon his loathsome bed. Carlyle says, "What sound is that, sound so terrible and so like to thunder? It is the rush of the whole court, as in some wager, to salute the next sovereigns: 'Hail to your Majesties!'" The body of the dead king is huddled under the ground, and his era of sin and tyranny and shame are repeated here and there as time goes on. All such is still vanity as in the days of Solomon.

What does it profit to be rich? How sad in our critical days to be so devoid of comfort as to imagine ourselves far from home and penniless, and to have loved ones pin money on our clothing in order to drive away if possible our delusion? What does it profit to be worth a million and a quarter, if in securing riches health be sacrificed and we be not able to eat a crust of bread? What does it profit to live in a brown-stone front on Fourth Avenue, and to find that society and money and luxuries can not bring even the scantiest satisfaction, and to have to send around the corner for the minister to see if he can persuade the young woman daughter in the home that life is preferable to suicide?

3. The preacher in view of such vanities asks some very searching questions for us all (3:1-6:12). The first is as to all of these recurring seasons and these ceaselessly repeated experiences (3:1-22). Is there no reason for them? Is there nothing beyond them? Does day give place to night, and night to day, and all to no purpose? Does summer pass into winter, and then winter into summer, and then back again for nothing? Even the changing days of the moon may be matched

by twenty-eight experiences of mankind with a time to be born, to die, to plant, to pluck up, to kill, to heal, to break down, to build up, to weep, to laugh, to mourn, to dance, to cast away stones, to gather stones together, to embrace, to refrain from embracing, to get, to lose, to keep, to cast away, to rend, to sew, to keep silence, to speak, to love, to hate, to war, to make peace.

Why are all these things done? Why do we desire to do them? Are we but beasts? Is there no hand or heart back of them? Is there no ruling will to direct? Is there no plan, no purpose? Back of the loaf is the snowy flour, and back of the flour is the mill; and back of the mill is the grain and the shower and the sun, and is it possible that there is not back of them all the Father's will?

The second of the preacher's searching questions is concerning the struggles through which we pass (4: 1-16). He sees many who are oppressed and who have no helper. Those in power seem to delight in opportunities for lording it over others. The miseries of mankind and the temptations to hate and to despise are easily discovered. Envy of the rich and of those in power are also to be found, and many gloat over any misfortune which may come to the objects of their jealousy. At the same time the rich are all too often slaves to their wealth, and seldom if ever think they have enough, and even deny themselves the only joys which money can bring. The king becomes poor, and the poor man becomes the ruler. Oppression and envy and idleness and covetousness and loneliness and wilfulness are within and around us. It is a gloomy picture.

The third question is as to material things and as

to why they become so easily and so repeatedly a snare and a sin (5:1-6:12). Even the vows of the sanctuary may become the sacrifice of fools and an occasion of evil. When a vow is made we should not defer to pay it, for in so failing we permit material things to bring us into sin against God. As Ewald says, "There blows throughout this book a piercing chill against every earthly aim and every vain endeavor; a contempt which changes into a bitter sneer against everything which in the usual proceedings of men is one-sided and perverse; an indefatigable penetration in the discovery of all human vanities and fooleries. In no earlier writing has all cause of pride and vain imagination so decidedly and so comprehensively been taken from man; and no book is pervaded by such an outcry of noble indignation against all that is vain in this world."

He who loves silver is not satisfied with silver, and abundance of increase brings no rest. Riches are kept to the hurt of the owner, and the products of earth are not used primarily as God's gifts for the support and comfort of life, but are hoarded and are made the channels of avarice. The more people have, the more they want. Those who do not possess material things want them, and those who have them are afraid they will lose them. Appetite and hunger and avarice and vexation and accidents and sickness and sorrow and disease and discontent and wrath bring the preacher again to his text, "All is vanity."

Is man not better than the beast? Who knows what is good for him in this life? Are all of his days spent as in a shadow and all of his life in vanity? Is there not something worth while in these material things? Are they always and only evil? If we cannot serve God and mammon, is it not possible to serve God with

mammon? Must the serpent hide itself under the wing of every aspiring eagle, and finally bring low all of his hopes? Was Wolsey right when he said if he had served Jehovah as faithfully as he had served his king, the Lord would not have abandoned him in his old age? Ecclesiastes is frankly placing before us the exact situation, and will later bring to us the same truth which we have had from Genesis on, that there are two ways and two voices and two choices, and happy is he who chooses God and holiness.

4. The preacher's searching studies of human conditions and vanities lead him to four important observations (7:1-11:10). The first is that self-mastery is most desirable, that this will bring poise and patience, and will greatly help in the discovery of true wisdom (7:1-29). Self-control will prevent the fanaticism which comes from being righteous over-much, and will keep us back from pretending to be wiser than the rest of the world, and will save us from the foolishness and madness which are more bitter than death and will enable us to escape the snares and nets spread for us by the enemy of souls.

His next observation (8:1-17) is that it is better with the godly in adversity than with the wicked in prosperity, that true wisdom takes God into account, that things are not to be judged by their mere outward appearance, that he who is truly worth while will think thoroughly and will weigh carefully and will decide wisely. The fool is the one who does otherwise. He is the one who because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily sets his heart to continue in evil.

The third observation (9:1-18) is that man at his best is only weak and frail; that much the same gen-

eral conditions obtain for all alike, both the righteous and the wicked; that death comes to every creature; that we have no control over the conditions under which we live and are not able to change even the weather about which we talk so much; that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong; that riches do not always come to those who are shrewd nor position to those who are capable; that as fish are taken in an evil net so are men snared in an evil time; that we cannot retain the luxuries of life even if we now possess them; and that after all, only those things are worth while which are in keeping with true wisdom, the right understanding of life in its relation to God and man.

The final general observation of the preacher (10: 1-11:10) is that life presents to us all great opportunities, and it should not be sacrificed to folly and revelry and envy and slothfulness and gluttony and drunkenness and money. Life is an opportunity to live nobly and well, to cast bread upon the waters and to find it again in bountiful harvest after many days, to sow in the morning the seed and to reap the results in the evening time, to make the best use of youth with its good cheer and vision, so that when God brings into judgment we shall see the wisdom of having put away evil and of having thus also put away sorrow.

The prodigal who yields to temptation and goes into the far country not only wastes his substance in riotous living, but loses life's great opportunity of investing for temporal and for eternal values that which was wasted and lost. True wisdom is not the mere learning of books, but is the ability to think and weigh and to decide for the best. We should consider what becomes of the prosperity of the wicked and also the

trouble which comes along with unrighteous revenues. It is not the injustice of God which brings sorrow, but the vanity of people.

Nations and governments come under the same rule, and disaster will surely come to the people who forget God. The ravings of German soldiers in the hospitals of France showed how nameless crimes came back to them, and in the history of nations we see the results of injustice and greed and unrighteousness. Only a little time on the sun-dial of the world, and we shall see that God's ways are higher than those of man and that the wages of sin will be finally and fully paid.

It is the part of wisdom to live nobly, to do good to others, to realize how much evil one wicked man may do and how much happiness one righteous man may bring, to keep in mind that we pass this way but once and to fill the passing days with worthy thoughts and ideals and purposes and deeds, to prepare for eternity and to know that the best preparation for eternity will be also the best preparation for the days yet ahead of us in this life. Youth and strength and opportunity are given for our happiness in two worlds, and the way we use or abuse them will decide whether we are fools or wise.

5. The preacher sums it all up in three conclusions, and says that after a full and careful study of all things and after a life of observation under the most favorable conditions, these are the things which are most important (12:1-14). The first is that life without God is vanity, that man plus God is wisdom, and that therefore every one should remember the Creator while still young, before the evil days come and dull the senses. Without the Lord nothing is of value, and to seek God in youth is to give to life its best and its

fullest meaning. The vanities of life should not lead to self-indulgence, or to pessimism, or to despair, but should lead to God and that too in the days of our youth.

The next conclusion is that we should dream of what we want to be when later years come, and should live toward that ideal. Old age will be our lot after awhile. The sun and moon and stars shall be darkened, when outward comforts and prosperity can mean nothing. The clouds shall return after the rain, and one bodily distemper shall follow another in quick succession, and the hands and arms as the keepers of the house shall tremble with weakness. The grinders shall be few, shall decay and fall out, shall be extracted because of the trouble they give. The eyes which look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the lips shall be shut as are the doors to the street, and sudden noises, even the voice of a bird shall disturb, and the daughters of music shall not longer respond in soft and pleasing voice, and the ears shall not catch the messages as of yore.

Then we shall be afraid to go up on that which is high, and we shall be weak and weary and shall stumble as we go, and fears shall be in our way. The almond tree shall flourish, and with the whitening of the hair the least weight shall become a burden too heavy for the infirm body, and bodily appetites and desires shall fail. All of this is true for man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. The brittle thread of life is broken, and the silver spinal cord is useless. The golden bowl no longer holds the thinking powers, the body ceases to be filled at the fountain for the heart refuses to do its work, and the vital processes have ended with the breaking of the

wheel at the cistern, and the final dissolution has taken place.

The third conclusion is that it is wise to fear God and keep his commandments. The preacher's meditations and researches counsel him that the young should seek God, that old age should be considered, and that throughout life God should be loved and feared and obeyed. Otherwise all is vanity. Otherwise proverbs and words and books and study are only a weariness of the flesh. We must not flatter ourselves that we are young and can therefore afford to delay. The author himself becomes a convert, and seeks to pass on to others the lessons learned from a sad experience.

God keeps books, and one day these books will be opened, and Jehovah will bring into judgment every work with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. The book of life will give us our standing before God in that great day, and the book of deeds will determine our reward. Every one of us must give account of himself to God for deed and word and thought, and those who are wise will learn to discern between good and evil, and will lay up treasures for old age and for eternity.

A business man, who had come to the end of the way, as he lay upon his sick-bed in his palatial home, and when medical skill had been exhausted in its attempts to prolong life, said to the writer, "A man sees things differently when he is down on his back. How I do hate the whiskey now which I used to love! How grateful I am for my Christian wife! If I had married a worldly woman, I would have been lost forever. My great mistake was made in not becoming a Christian early in life, and in failing to prepare myself in that way for a life of usefulness." The business man had

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come to the same conclusions as the preacher king, and had he realized this earlier he would not have been cut down in the very prime of life. Let us fear God and keep his commandments, and not fail of life's one and real and only worthy purpose! Life then will not be only vanity and vexation of spirit, but will be wisdom and usefulness and power and joy and peace.

Nansen tells that when he started on his Arctic expedition he took with him a carrier pigeon, which was released after two years of absence from home. A message was prepared and carefully attached to the bird, and then it was released. More than two thousand miles of desolation and ice and sea separated Nansen from the loved ones in far distant Norway, and the trembling bird seemed to understand that something unusual was taking place. When the pigeon was tossed up in the chill air, it made some two or three circles above the heads of those who watched it, and then seeming to be sure of its orientation it went straight toward the explorer's home. Its safe arrival announced to Nansen's wife and home people that all was well with him, and that in mind and heart he was still untravelled.

It is told of John Wesley that among the last things he said when dying was, "The best of all is that God is with us." He had learned that great lesson in his long and powerful and useful life, and any individual or nation has laid a foundation for security and for progess when this truth of revelation has been made real. Savonarola and Calvin and Luther and Knox and Whitfield and Edwards and Moody lived and died in the same personal consciousness of divine presence and approval. Napoleon said of Christianity, "If it is not the true religion, one is very excusable in being

deceived, for everything in it is grand and worthy of God. I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or explain it. Here everything is extraordinary. The more I consider the gospel the more I am assured that there is nothing in it which is not beyond the march of human events, and above the human mind. Even the impious themselves have never dared to deny the sublimity of the gospel, which inspires them with a sort of compulsory veneration." Jehovah would have the world know even by our chastening that righteousness is far above rubies.

A New Orleans daily paper wrote recently an editorial on the statement made by a modern writer, that "Religion hasn't the authority it once had." The editor said it would not be strange if this were true at some periods and with some people, and that such a condition had recurred from time to time, and that the darkest periods of the world's history usually preceded a nearer and fuller revelation of God's power in the world. He cited the time immediately preceding the coming of Christ, and said the wish was probably the father to the thought with those who see the authority of religion slipping. The doubting Thomas was called to observe the new and greater churches going up everywhere; to see the hospitals and larger homes and orphanages being built; to consider the charitable work of every kind being organized; to the advancing strides of civilization; to note that the atheists and infidels seek places of residence under the protection of the churches; to recall the triumphs of Christianity in foreign lands; to examine General

Feng's army which is Christian down to the humblest private; to listen to the nations crushed by materialism asking for missionaries; to turn to the discoveries of archæology in one year surpassing the inventions of science; to remember that religion is losing its authority to some as the sun is losing its heat; and to hold to the fact that God is still omnipotent and still reigns supreme.

5: SONG OF SOLOMON

(1) *The village girl and the king's desire.*
(2) *The canonicity and the various theories.*
(3) *The family history, its theology, its wisdom.*
(4) *Canticles gives the verity of love.*

I. THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE BETROTHED TO HIM.

1 The attempt to win the Shulamite.

2 The attempt to win the Christian.

II. THE BETROTHAL OF GOD'S PEOPLE IS ONE OF LOVE.

1 This was true of the Shulamite.

2 This is true of those who are saved.

III. THERE ARE MANY AND ALLURING TEMPTATIONS.

1 They fail when offered by Solomon.

2 Do they fail when offered by Satan?

IV. THOSE WHO ARE BETROTHED IN LOVE WILL BE FAITHFUL.

1 The women of the harem were amazed.

2 The people of the world need such an example.

V. THE FAITHFUL WILL BE FINALLY AND FULLY REWARDED.

1 This came true with the Shulamite.

2 It will come true with the Christian.

CONCLUSION:

A. Christ's church needs our love and loyalty.

B. His bride is most precious to him.

C. Marriage illustrates our obligation.

Bible—"He that loveth is born of God."

Bible—"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Bailey—"None but the brave and beautiful can love."

Shakespeare—"They do not love that do not show their love."

Tennyson—"It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Penn—"Never marry but for love; but see that thou love that which is lovely."

Fuller—"It is to be feared that they who marry where they do not love will love where they do not marry."

James—"It is those that are planted in the courts of the Lord who shall flourish, and not those that are occasionally there."

5: SONG OF SOLOMON

or

A LOVE STORY PRESERVED FOR THE FAMILY

One day the richest and most famous king of history was passing through a portion of his empire known as Shulam. He was arrayed in royal apparel, was attended by a great retinue of servants, and was taking with him such officials as would be interested in rural conditions. Inspecting the vineyards he came upon one which was unusually well kept, and which was being cultivated by the sons of a widow. They had an only sister, lovely, charming, beautiful, modest, pious, loyal. She was the joy and comfort of her mother and the companion and pride of her brothers.

On this particular day she was on the way from her work in the vineyard, and was met by the king and his company of courtiers and servants and soldiers. The king was so captured and overwhelmed by her beauty and modest behavior, that he later ordered his men to go after her and bring her to the royal pavilion. She was taken against her will to Jerusalem, was treated with every courtesy, was given every luxury, was welcomed with great pomp, was furnished everything she could wish in the way of costume and servants and equipage. The king hoped that all of this display and all of this dazzling splendor would so

appeal to her that she would consent to remain in Jerusalem and be a member of the king's harem.

It was all in vain. Back in the neighborhood of Shulam was a young shepherd, whom she had met near the vineyard while tending his flock and to whose strength and nobility and purity she had responded with the promise of her hand and love and life. True to her worthy fiancé, true to her pure and pious love, she spurned all of the promises of the king, she resented the allurements offered by the rich and ardent sovereign, she turned from all offers of position and rank, she despised the gayety and emptiness of the palace, and remained loyal to the true and worthy young shepherd. She assured Solomon that her love was sacredly and eternally given to her first love.

Solomon had failed. He was at last so convinced of her sincerity and beauty of character, and he so admired her loyalty and strength of will, that she was given permission to quit the palace and to leave Jerusalem. The young shepherd who had sought again and again to recover his bride was notified, came to the city, was permitted to claim the young Shulamite as his own, and in gratitude and in happiness the two returned to their native place and to the life of love and peace.

Canticles, the Song of Songs, usually known as Solomon's Song, is among the most beautiful of Hebrew poems, and has been so variously interpreted that it is impossible to be dogmatic as to the persons involved or as to the exact application. The name of God does not occur anywhere in the eight chapters. There is no quotation from the book in the New Testament. There is an absence of worship and of pious devotion, and there is no claim made of prophetic

vision. The book is in much the same class with Esther and Job, and for much the same reasons. Esther was faithful under great danger, Job was faithful in the midst of great affliction, and the Shulamite was faithful in the face of great temptation.

Canticles is found in all Hebrew collections of the Bible and in the Septuagint, in all early Christian catalogues, and has all of the external marks of other books except those named. Matthew Henry says, "All Scripture, we are sure, is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for the support and the advancement of the interests of his Kingdom among men, and it is none the less so for there being found in it some things dark and hard to be understood, which those that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction. In our belief both of the divine extraction and of the spiritual exposition of this book, we are confirmed by the ancient, constant, and recurring testimony both of the Jews to whom were committed the oracles of God, and who never made any doubt of the authenticity of this book, and of the Christian church which happily succeeds them in this trust of honor."

There are four varieties of opinion as to the Song of Songs. To some it is purely an allegory, and is a picture and prophecy of Christ and his bride, the church. To others it is only a love song of Solomon and probably the daughter of Pharaoh. To still others it is a description of a Hebrew young woman who was sought by some king and who refused him for her shepherd lover. To many it is both history and allegory, and describes an actual occurrence in the life of Solomon, and is written down and preserved because it is a prophecy and a picture of Christ and the church. The marriage bond is the figure whereby both apostles

and prophets represent the relation between Jehovah and his people (Isa. 62; Jer. 3; Ezek. 16). In the Song of Songs the bride praises the bridegroom, and the bridegroom is tender and true and worthy. "Shulamith," seeker of peace, is not only feminine, but is collective and may indicate the many who constitute the one. The whole story is true to Hebrew nuptial rites. It is a protest against polygamy, and stands for marriage from genuine love, for purity of life, for the sacred relationship of husband and wife, and that too in the midst of an evil age. The bride of Christ has been tempted and is being tempted to be untrue to her absent Lord; and in the Song of Songs, with all of the strong and impassioned language and figures of the Orientals, we have given to us the abiding and sacred and beautiful qualities of love and loyalty.

We have had in our study of the Bible the beginnings and the history of the chosen people, and then their theology, and their books of wisdom. In Ecclesiastes there was the general survey of life with its toil and brevity and repetition and lack of satisfaction. A closer study led to some necessary questions and some important observations and vital conclusions, and man was found to be too great for this world to be able to fill and satisfy him.

Now in Canticles, finding that this world cannot satisfy, man looks beyond and above the mere commands and duties and forms of religion, and finds a sacred and joyous love which reaches its perfection in God, and which was to be seen one day in Christ's love for his church and in that of the church for Christ. As the sea fills the cup but cannot be contained by it, so the heart of man may be filled with the love and peace of God, but cannot know its perfection and

its completeness. "Though God extends beyond creation's rim, each tiny atom holds the whole of him." Divine love cannot be fully known even in Canticles or in Ephesians, yet we do see here that "Vanity" may give place to "Verity," that duty may be succeeded by love, that the song of faithful love may be the guidepost on the way to the gospel of mercy and grace and joy. The right of the Song of Solomon to a place in Scripture has been more seriously questioned than perhaps any other book, but it is an inspired foreshadowing of the union between Christ and his church, and it is on this ground that it was given a place in the canon of sacred writings and on this ground that it has been retained in its place in the Bible.

1. The Lord's people are betrothed to him (1:2-2:7). The country maiden is wooed by the king and he offers to her the luxuries of the palace, but she cannot be divorced from the real love of her heart and can never lose the memories of the simple and happy country life. The pastoral home, the vineyard, the bees, the grass, the flowers, the flocks, God's out-of-doors surpass with her all the splendors of the palace, and her heart yearns for the one whom her soul loves as she imagines him resting at noon with his flock about him.

The Shulamite and her ladies in waiting are conversing together and she is telling them of her longing to be away, while they are seeking to impress her with what they deem her unusual good fortune. Solomon and his attendants enter, and the royal wooer tells her of her beauty and of his admiration and desire. She tells of her love for the shepherd, and says that to her he is as the apple tree among the trees of the wood. His banqueting house was not one of cedars and did

not have over it the flag of royalty, but it was exquisitely built and completed and furnished by nature even to carpets of green, and over it floated the banner of love.

Those who are saved are betrothed to the Lord, and they must surely be true to him it matters not how the world may seek to win them from their Savior. They must remember that to be untrue to him is to be guilty of spiritual adultery, surely a most revolting and inexcusable crime. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

In July of 1918 a young woman betrothed to a soldier boy bade him good-bye, as he was about to take his way across the sea to France, to do his part in a great and worthy cause, a struggle for liberty, a struggle to free the peoples from threatened national slavery. He won honor and distinction, and in 1921 he came back wearing medals and the cross of honor, and with the highest title possible to the brave and true soldier. He returned great in soul and great in fame and great in the possibilities of the future. In his absence the young woman had been going the way of the foolish and frivolous. She had grown smaller in soul, had sacrificed nobility of character, had married a man who was a worldling and a slacker, one who had begun early to break the fair promises he had made to her. By the time the soldier came back she was an outcast, a most unhappy woman, and one whose very name was distasteful to the noble man to whom she had been betrothed.

Christian people should be as loyal to their Lord as the bride should be to her husband, and the young

man who seeks a worthy wife will most likely find her among those who are true to Christ and his church. If she is willing to turn the Lord's day into picnics and frolics and frivolity, if she is ready to neglect the service of the Lord's house in order to please him, then she may violate all vows to him in order to please the other man who comes along a little later with his fair promises. She who is distinguished by her consideration for her parents, and by her attention to Christian duties and obligations, is the one most likely who will be true to the sacredness and the duties of the home life.

2. This betrothal of God's people is one of love (2:8-3:5). The Shulamite recalls some of the scenes from her past life, when she and her shepherd lover were happy together, and record is given of what seems to be a dream, in which she was seeking for him from whom she was so unwillingly separated. The glitter of court life wearies her, and its artificiality is not satisfying. The one thing lacking to make her happy is the presence of the one to whom she is betrothed and whom she really loves.

She seems to hear the music of his approach, traversing the hills, swift as an antelope. She once again sees the flowers of the country, hears the singing of the birds, watches the advancing fruit, rejoices in the swelling neck of the hills of grain, responds to the cooing call of nature. She longs to leave the riches of the palace and to be with her betrothed in the home of her mother, and in her dream she charges the women, the attendants of the palace, that they do not disturb the happiness which has come to her in the betrothal of affection.

The child of God will commune with his own heart

upon his bed and be still, and will remember that the lines have fallen unto him in pleasant places. He will bless the Lord for the counsel and the instruction given unto him in the night seasons. Because the Lord is his redeemer, because Jehovah is at his right hand, he will not be moved. The love of those who constitute the bride of Christ for their Lord is their greatest joy. They recall the blessed experience they have had with him, and they often and over again in day dreams and in night visions go on the wings of faith to find him whom they love more than all the world beside. Theirs is not a betrothal of fear, or of advantage, or of mere sentiment, but one of pure and true affection.

"God," the greatest lover; has "so loved," to the greatest degree; "the world," in its greatest need; "that he gave," in the greatest act of love; "his only begotten Son," heaven's greatest possible gift; "that whosoever," the supreme, the greatest, the widest invitation; "believeth," the greatest simplicity in plan; "in him," the one and only and greatest way of salvation; "should not perish," the greatest promise for time and eternity; "but," the greatest change and eternity-wide difference; "have," the greatest certainty and the most wonderful present condition; "everlasting life," the greatest possession that now is and the greatest in the world to come.

Longfellow once wrote, "It is difficult to know at what moment love begins; it is less difficult to know it has begun. A thousand heralds proclaim it to the listening air, a thousand messengers betray it to the eye. Tone, act, attitude and look, the signals upon the countenance, the electric telegraph of touch—all these betray the yielding citadel before the word itself is uttered, which, like the key surrendered, opens every

avenue and gate of entrance, and renders retreat impossible."

"Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings
Of that mysterious instrument, the soul,
And play the prelude of our fate. We hear
The voice prophetic, and are not alone."

"My Jesus I love thee, I know thou art mine,
For thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou;
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

3. There are many and alluring temptations to Christian people to be untrue (3:6-4:7). Here again Solomon approaches in royal state, and his greatness and his wealth and his retinue and his pomp and display are all called into play, that the kingly suitor may impress the young Shulamite. He praises her and her beauty and attempts to win her consent to be his wife, to win her from the shepherd lover to whom she is betrothed. He comes in the palanquin, is surrounded by sixty of the stoutest heroes of Israel and is preceded by the royal carriage of cedar and silver and gold and purple. He uses all flattery and calls into service all eastern extravagance in proclaiming his enslavement to her beauty, and crowns it all by saying, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

The Shulamite bids the daughters of Jerusalem go forth and behold King Solomon, and to observe the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart, but she cares not for him and turns ever in her devotion to the manly and virile shepherd of the hills.

She cares not for flattery, and is not moved by the amorous affection or the sensual words and phrases of the young king.

How true to the approaches of the world today! How eager and seductive and sensual and amorous are the pleasures which the enemy of souls is presenting constantly to young men and young women, and how foolish and how untrue and how disloyal they are when they yield! Just as Satan took Jesus up to a high mountain to show him the world and tried to induce the Christ to fall down and worship, so today the glamor of the world is presented to Christians. The camouflage, the fascination, the deception, the flattery, the gayety, the trappings of indulgence and sinful pleasures are constantly placed before the young Christians in an endeavor to win them from their sacred betrothal to Jesus.

Even while fathers and brothers and sons were dying in France some of their loved ones were engaged in wild and repulsive dances, in gambling for prizes, and some were hiding their eyes from the flowing blood of battle and were closing their ears against the cries of the wounded. What a fascination sin has about it, and how the pleasures of evil, even though these pleasures be for only a season, do blind and enslave those whose hearts have not been changed. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Christians love their shepherd and love holds them true.

Anthony Hope tells the beautiful story of a miser who had all but lost his soul for money, and who was transformed and made new by a self-sacrificing love.

No one knew the man was rich because he lived as a pauper. Little Peggy most unexpectedly came his way and at first he did not want her near him, until he came to realize that she had no thought of his money, but in an unselfish and gentle and patient way she did everything she knew to do to make him comfortable. Slowly, and without either one of them realizing it, Peggy was showing the miser the beauty and joy and power of love. At last he resolved that he too would try to make some one else happy, and beginning with the expenditure of a few pennies he came more and more to know the joy of it, and his heart and love and joy grew until the miser became a philanthropist.

4. Those who are betrothed to Christ in true Christian love are faithful to him (4:8-6:3). The shepherd is permitted to speak and remembers with longing his absent bride and in his heart calls to her upon the mountains, and calls to mind the transporting views from Lebanon and Amanah and from Shemir and Hermon. He tells her how she has carried off his heart, has "dishearted" him, how far beyond wine and how far beyond all aromatics and all flowers and fruits and nard and cinnamon and incense and balsam she is to him.

The Shulamite sleeps, but her heart wakes, and she seems to hear the voice of the shepherd as he knocks and calls. She at last rises to open to him, but finds him not, and she calls but he does not answer. The women attendants ask why she is so devoted to her lover, and wherein he is so superior to others. She describes him so wonderfully that they ask where they might find him, and suggest that they might seek him out and bring him to her. She once again proclaims her affection and says, "I am my beloved's and my

beloved is mine." She gives this as the explanation of her faithfulness and as the reason for refusing the worldly pomp and pleasure. The pampered women of the harem think her most foolish, but the pure Shulamite woman disdains a place in such a tawdry company, and as a devout servant of Jehovah she prefers the true and the pure. The chaste virgin was a mystery to the heathen women of Solomon's court, and until this day the purity and modesty of Christian young women is amazing to those whose hearts are set upon the vanity and sham and frivolity of the world. Even so the worldling cannot understand why the child of God finds more joy and satisfaction in love for the absent Christ, than in the fawning deceit and false promises of mammon.

Sinful and pleasure-mad companions try to draw away the Christian from the church, and they ask, "Why is your Beloved better than the world?" "Why do you refuse to go with us?" "What do you mean by being so foolish as to turn away from all that king Vanity has to offer?" They do not understand how Christ, the great magnet, can hold by a power unseen, and they do not realize how cheap are the tawdry gifts of the world compared with the diamonds which the divine Bridegroom bestows.

Hon. Amos Kendall, formerly postmaster-general of the United States, came into a church in Washington, and with tears of regret in his eyes said he wanted to make a confession. He told the church that for years he had tried to live a good moral life, that he had often claimed to get along as well out of the church as he could in it, and that he had just heard of one who had been led by his example to do the same and who was weaker than he and had died a

wreck. He began thinking, and came to realize that at least twelve people had died without hope whom he might have helped to save. There that day Mr. Kendall made humble confession, and asked those in the church and those not members to forgive him, and to help him for the remaining years to be a true and loyal Christian worker and to set the right kind of an example.

5. Those children of God who do love him truly and who are faithful will find their reward to be greater than human hearts can conceive (6:4-8:14). Once again and for the last time the king comes and seeks to win the loyal Shulamite. She declares again her love for the absent one, and insists that she will remain true to him forever, despite all the flattery and all the promises of Solomon. He once more pours out in fanciful figures of speech his estimate of her beauty and her charms, but it is as unavailing as before. She is at last released and returns to the land of her nativity, and to her own people, and to the shepherd lover of whom she says again, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." She relates her experience and tells the shepherd lover of her loyalty and constancy, and the close of the Song of Songs tells of the happiness of the Shulamite and her shepherd lover now that they have been reunited in the hills. "Come," says he, "and let us go out into the fields, let us inspect the vineyards, let us taste of the beauties and the joys of God's great out of doors." Only those who do not understand Jewish customs and eastern expressions find here any seeming indelicacies and allusions to matrimonial privacies, for not until the last is there any reference to even a kiss, and then it is put under the figure of a suckling infant brother.

To quote from another, "The dignity of the persons is well sustained in the dignity of their language, in the correctness of their ideas and expressions; they are guilty of no repetitions; what they occasionally repeat they vary, and improve by the variation; they speak in poetry, and poetry furnishes the images they use; but those images are pleasing, magnificent, varied, and appropriate; they are no doubt, as they should be, local, and we do not feel half their propriety because of their locality; but we feel enough to admit that few are the authors who could thus happily conduct such a poem; few are the personages who could sustain the characters in it, and few are the readers in any nation or in any time, who have not ample cause to admire it and to be thankful for its presentation as the Song of Songs."

Marital vows should be of love, and surely we realize the need of this lesson in our own land of quick marriages and divorces and remarriages. Church vows are just as sacred, and many who are ready to denounce those who are unfaithful to the marriage bond are at the same time condemning themselves for their unfaithfulness to the Savior and to his bride the church. Solomon had a vineyard which he let out to keepers, and each one of them was to bring him a thousand pieces of silver (8:11). We are put in charge of a vineyard, and we should not fail to bring of its fruit to our King.

Some claim that they can be just as good Christians out of the church of Christ as in it, and who that says this can possibly know the selfishness of such a statement and the lack of love for the Savior in such an ideal? What about others? Where would the churches be if all of us were as lacking in loyalty? Lot's choice

was one dominated by selfishness and by worldly motives, and it was most costly to him, for he lost his property, his best friends, his power over men, his influence over his own family, his peace of mind, his honor, and his confidence in God.

Those who love Christ and are true to him and are faithful to their vows of betrothal will be among that number who are to constitute the bride of Christ. They are now his joy and pride for he loved the church and gave himself for her; that he might make her holy and that he might present her to himself at last a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle or any other defect. She is to be holy and unblemished. When God would illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church he seemingly could find no better figure than betrothal and marriage, for he said that the husband should love his wife and give himself for her even as Christ loved and gave himself for the church, and that the wife should love and reverence her husband even as the church does Christ. The inspired writer adds, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The reward begins even in this life and the pay is quick and abundant. An outcast, rescued in a gospel mission in one of our cities, was charged with receiving pay for professing to be a Christian. He had been one of the most wicked of men, his face bore the marks of sin, and the police had turned him out of jail, saying, "Don't you come back here," or as the man put it, "I was so low down that they did not want me in jail." In reply to the charge of receiving pay, he replied that it was true, and that his pay was great. He said, "I had a good home and a kind father, but I lied to him and swindled him and was vile and mean.

He finally told me to leave home and never to come back, and asked me to change my name lest I drag it into the depths. I have not heard my own name for three years. My mother died of a broken heart, and my sister's name is too pure to be upon my lips. Last Friday morning I sat down and wrote to my father and told him of the change that had come into my heart and life. I told him that it was not a request to take me back, but it was a confession of my sin and a request that he forgive me.

"This morning these letters came. One from my sister. I thought she had blotted my foul image out of her heart long ago, but instead of that she says she has prayed for me three times a day, and that the best news she has ever received came in my letter. Father says in his letter that all of the past is forgiven and that I can't come home too soon to suit him. I am going home tomorrow, boys, and I tell you that I am getting paid for my faith in Christ. Yes, I am getting paid for it."

As the Song of Solomon tells us in the last chapter, "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." Love is not for sale. Love cannot be bought. Love is loyal. Love is true. The greatest of these is love.

A poor woman greatly desired a bunch of grapes for her sick child, and knowing that just what she desired was to be found in the king's conservatory, she came to the keeper and brought all the money she had and offered to pay for just one bunch of grapes.

The man in charge answered her rudely and sent her away. As she left the conservatory entrance and was making her way back home she was weeping on account of the failure to secure the grapes. The king's daughter met the poor woman and, seeing that she was in tears, asked her the occasion of her sorrow. She told of the sick child and her desire, and of her experience with the keeper. The princess bade her come again to the conservatory with her, and gathering splendid clusters of grapes from the vine she placed them in the woman's apron, and said, "My good woman, you made a great mistake. You thought my father was a merchant. He is not a merchant. He is a king. It is his delight to give. He does not sell."

A poor sufferer, who had wandered far and was already beginning to realize the remorse that must follow unfaithfulness and sin, was asked if he had called upon God for mercy and pardon. His quick reply was, "That I have." The worker continued, "Do you think that God has written down your prayer in his book?" The despairing man said, "I did not know that he kept a book for my prayers." Then said the friend, "God tells us that a book of remembrance is kept of our thoughts when we think upon his name." Imagine then this entry in that book today, "February 25th. On this day William T—— asked me for forgiveness of his sins in the name of my beloved Son, and I refused him." The sinning man looked up and said, "No, sir, I cannot believe that." After a few moments in answer to the question as to what he believed was written in the book beside his prayer he said, "Granted." The fears and fetters disappeared with the expression of his faith, and repentance and trust soon began to bear fruit in confession and service.

6: ISAIAH

(1) *The year that King Uzziah died.*
(2) *The last division of the Old Testament.*
(3) *The doctrine of the remnant.*
(4) *Isaiah in the midst of grave issues.*
(5) *Salvation the great prophet's theme.*

I. NATIONAL SALVATION.

Would the Hebrew people survive prosperity?

1 They must turn from their wicked ways.

2 They must put away false religions.

3 They must make no unholy alliances.

4 They must guard against pride and rebellion and unbelief.

II. SPIRITUAL SALVATION.

Would the Hebrew people be delivered?

1 This salvation is to come from a merciful and faithful God.

2 This salvation is to come through a suffering servant.

3 This salvation could be enjoyed only through repentance, faith, obedience.

4 This salvation is made sure and will be completed by divine power and grace.

Bible—"Our light affliction which is but for a moment."

Southey—"There is healing in the bitter cup."

Herbert—"Corn is cleaned with wind and the soul with chastening."

Cicero—"Prosperity demands of us more prudence and moderation than adversity."

Rousseau—"Remorse goes to sleep during a prosperous period and wakes up in adversity."

Ruskin—"All other passions do occasional good; but when pride puts in its word everything goes wrong."

Beecher—"Natural law itself would go out in a minute if it were not for the divine thought that is behind it."

Smith—"God's plans, like lilies pure and white unfold; we must not tear the close-shut leaves apart; time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

6: ISAIAH

OR

A GREAT STATESMAN-PROPHET IN THE FAMILY

"In the year that King Uzziah died," a young man, who was city-born and city-reared, felt the great loss to the nation, realized how fleeting and uncertain were the lives and power of kings, went into the temple for worship and meditation and comfort, and there had a vision of Jehovah and there received his call to be a prophet. The nation was blessed at this time with two great preachers. The one was Isaiah, the city preacher, and the other was Micah, who resided in the country and who saw the same evils as did Isaiah and delivered messages that were faithful and fearless. Micah summed up Jehovah's requirements in the statement that the Lord did not ask for gifts and sacrifices, but desired that the people do justly and love mercy and that they walk humbly with their God.

We have been considering God's great desire and the beginnings of its fulfilment, we have studied the history of the family and its lessons, we have profited by the doctrines and have meditated upon the books of wisdom; and the Bible, the wondrous and matchless and precious book, has grown dearer and dearer each day. An old Kentucky grandmother had a stand on which she placed her Bible, so that she could read while she continued her knitting. One day a little child

in the home said, "Grandma, haven't you gotten all the news out of that book yet?" No, it never grows old, but is new every morning and fresh every evening to those who are able to discern things spiritual.

With Isaiah there begins the last division of the Old Testament, the seventeen books of prophecy, five major and twelve minor. Those who prophesied under the monarchy and who lived in Judah were Joel, Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Jeremiah, and the ones who lived in Israel were Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Those who prophesied during the captivity were Ezekiel, Obadiah, and Daniel, and the prophets of the restoration were Haggai and Zechariah and Malachi.

These men were heralds of righteousness, they were the men divinely called to speak to the people of God. Their foretelling was one way Jehovah had of placing the seal of divine sanction upon them, but the ability to predict future events was not necessarily a characteristic of the prophet. They were God-called men to keep before the family the choice of holiness, and to warn against all sin and uncleanness, and to constantly proclaim the way of redemption and peace and mercy and justice and power and blessing. The heart of the history of the Hebrew people and of the prophetical books discloses a national foundation for the spiritual doctrine of the remnant and for the promise of a coming Messiah.

The remnant, those who were in God's family, would be purged and true and loyal, and would think much of "the last days," "the day of the Lord." They would look forward to the coming of the Christ, born of a virgin, anointed of the Spirit, beginning in Galilee, characterized by meekness and tenderness, possessing

the power to perform miracles, with his face marred, despised and rejected and insulted, bearing their griefs and their sorrows, led as a lamb to the slaughter, making his grave with the wicked and the rich; and then the one whose offering for sin would save, who would make intercession for them, who would be the chief corner-stone of the church, who would be the Savior of the Gentiles, whose kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom, and to whom all who thirst for the water of life were invited.

Isaiah's love for Jerusalem is seen both in his life and in his utterances. In his vision Zion was to be the center of the religious welfare of the world, the heavenly city, the rallying place of all the redeemed, the new Jerusalem come down from heaven, the city of the Great King, the place for the crowning of the Messiah. In Isaiah's time the whole land was prosperous, and it was an era of wealth and comfort and luxury, and to the prophet there came grave fears for his people and for his beloved Jerusalem in the lowering standard of morals, in the oppression of the poor, in the compromises with the heathen, in the neglect of Jehovah. His forebodings were well grounded, for later on Assyria came down upon them as Germany did upon Belgium, and the war of enslavement began which finally led the people away into captivity.

Isaiah, this young man of true culture and genuine piety, began his ministry in the midst of prosperity and luxury, but was told in his call to the ministry that he would preach until the cities were depopulated and the land had become utterly waste. It was a gloomy prospect, but he was told that a remnant would be saved and that through the few would come the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles.

If Isaiah were living in our land, he would be the great spiritual adviser of the nation, he would be fearless in his warnings against the evils of the day, he would hold up ideals of holiness and purity and honesty, and would be prophesying that Christ will finally reign through the consecration of the few.

We too are in the midst of great issues and are beholding events which will stand out on the pages of history. We also are seeing the struggles of a chosen people living in the midst of plenty and meeting the temptations of luxury. We are hearing from our great leaders and preachers that we are only trustees of these divine favors, and that our blessings will be our curse if we fail to be good stewards of the manifold mercies of God. Isaiah's faithful ministry failed to turn the nation from its downward course. Will we give heed to the men whom God has chosen to bring us light on our way?

Isaiah saw that other nations, that all of the nations were involved, and his vision was not restricted to his own people or to his own times. Wonderful as it may seem, this preacher of the chosen family saw that Jews and Gentiles were one in their responsibility to Jehovah, and that they were to be one in the redemption bought by the Messiah and in the kingdom over which he was to reign. The costly hand-painted china must go through the furnace more than once, and among the many patterns put on in varying colors only that which is black in the painting will be gold when it comes out of the fire.

Salvation is Isaiah's theme, and this theme constantly comes to the fore with a two-fold application. We can read Isaiah with its prophecies and its history, and see the nations passing before Jehovah's awful judg-

ment throne, and hear the verdict of the Lord spoken by the prophet, but all the time we realize that there is something greater and more meaningful which does not have its fulfilment in what we are seeing with our physical eyes. A nation has a soul, even as our bodies have, as a school has, as a community has, and as an age of the world has; and Isaiah's message is to the soul of the nation, even more than to the body of the nation. The family of Jehovah is in grave peril, and this chosen minister with the vision of a seer is speaking to them for God.

1. National salvation is the first thing that we hear and see in the gospel according to Isaiah (1-39). Will the Hebrew nation abide in the midst of prosperity and luxury? Can they have plenty and hold high position, and still maintain right living and true worship? Can the people be kept from financial and material and physical and social and political and moral ruin? Yes, it can be done, and Isaiah's prophecy tells the nation the divine cure for the threatening malady.

(1) They must turn from their wicked ways (1-12). It is the same old world yesterday and today, and we are evidently the same kind of beings as those about whom history writes in the days of the prophet Isaiah. We have the same struggles with sin that mankind has had through the ages. It was through wickedness that Israel and Judah fell, and so it was with Babylon and Egypt and Assyria and Greece and Rome and Spain and Germany, and so it will be with all the nations that forget God.

Isaiah tells Judah of her sin and apostasy, utters a plea for repentance, warns against alliance with Syria, gives the sign to Ahaz of the virgin who should conceive and bear a child, and says that the refusal

of Judah to heed the call of God would bring on a deep darkness from which they could not find an escape. He pictures Judah as one whose body has been whipped and beaten until it is full of wounds and bruises, and he tells them that if they will only give heed and repent they will be exalted and blessed.

God's people are as a vineyard, which has been given every care and in which are the vines of his own planting, and he is disappointed because of their failure to bring forth good grapes. His people have been the objects of his love and favor, and instead of bearing fruit to his glory, they have been a reproach to him. The Assyrian nation would be the rod with which Jehovah would chasten them. These heathen people would think that their successes in battle were due to their own greatness, but would in time reap the harvest of their pride, and then when Assyria should fall the remnant of Judah would return.

The woes pronounced against landsharks, against drunkenness and revelling, against rebellion and sinful unbelief, against the perversion of moral distinctions, against conceited and presumptuous office-holders, against corrupted and corrupting judges, all sound very modern and very American. The denunciation of women whose highest ideal is dress and the description of their haughtiness and their wanton eyes and their mincing walk, are alike quite appropriate for a message today. He gives a list of their ornaments, such as chains, bracelets, pendants, beads, ear-rings, headbands, nose jewels, money bags, vanity mirrors, veils, hoods, girdles, and says that their perfumes shall become obnoxious, their well set hair shall give way to baldness, and brands and skin diseases shall take the place of beauty.

(2) They must put away the false religions of the nations, and worship the true God (13-27). The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel does not remember that all she has is the gift of Jehovah. Sin is the fire, and the sinner is the tow, and the evil deed is the spark, and where the sinner and his work are there will be found the smoke of false worship and the flames of suffering and remorse and hell. Such preaching ought to have turned Israel from her national sins and from the worship of false gods, but today as then such a faithful prophet will be called a "calamity howler" and will be urged to "cut out that sob-stuff." The same people will cry the loudest when they get into trouble, and will call the quickest for the man of God to pray for them and comfort them when they begin to reap their certain harvest.

Assyria and Babylon and Philistia and Moab and Syria and Ethiopia and Egypt and Edom and Arabia and Tyre with their idolatry are all to be destroyed. How foolish then for Jehovah's people to turn from the true and the living God to the helpless gods of these tottering nations! The Lord is ruling over these nations, and some day they will see and Judah will see that Jehovah has punished the wickedness of all those who have oppressed his people, and that in all of his providences he has been dealing with the chosen people for their good and for the good of the world through them. Jehovah is the true God, and all the false religions are an affront to him and must fall and pass away, and his judgments upon his own people and upon the heathen will only accentuate the redemption of God's family. Those who used to say that it made no difference what one believed, have learned that what

Germany believed made a great deal of difference with them and with us and with the rest of the world.

Heinrich Heine, disabled by disease and discouraged and worn and weary and hopeless, cast himself down before that wonderful piece of marble, the Venus de Milo, and he says of the experience, "There I lay a long time and wept so passionately that a stone must have had compassion on me. The goddess looked down compassionately upon me, but she was helpless to console me. She looked as if she would say, 'See you not that I have no arms, and that therefore I can give you no help?'" Idols of marble and gold and silver and wood and clay are not only an insult to Jehovah, but are a reflection upon man's reason and intelligence.

(3) They must no longer continue their unholy alliances (28-35). The drunkards of Ephraim and the scoffers of Israel together with the wrongdoers of Judah will surely meet with terrible punishment, and no alliance with Egypt can bring them deliverance. God's people should remember that their help must come from him, and Isaiah's urgent appeal to them is that they turn from their sins and trust in Jehovah. Sennacherib is to invade Palestine and to bring with him his terrible and dreaded Assyrian hosts, and the prophet is distressed that Hezekiah is planning to turn to Egypt for help rather than to Jehovah.

Over against the gloomy outlook of sin and of unholy alliances, Isaiah is given the vision of the great deliverance and the surpassing glory which are to accompany the messianic kingdom. We are amazed that God's people should have been so blind and so foolish and that they should have so trifled with Jehovah, but we are just as guilty today, maybe more so, for we

have the clearer light and the fuller revelation in the New Testament and in Jesus.

The nations are to meet Jehovah and are to feel the weight of his just judgments, and are to finally acknowledge him as the one and true God, and Judah is to enjoy the long looked for peace and safety and happiness and prosperity. Their history had been marked by apostasy and by sin, and they must know by bitter experience that they cannot take fire into the bosom without being burned; but the Messiah will come and will set up his kingdom, and at last the chosen people will return and will serve Jehovah.

Victor Hugo gives a graphic picture of the man who walking on the beach gets into the quicksands. At first he perceives that his progress is more difficult, and the strand beneath his feet becomes as pitch, or glue, but the eye sees no change, and he is not anxious. Suddenly he sinks in some two or three inches, and the depth increases with every step. Evidently he is on the wrong road, and he looks at his feet, only to discover that they have disappeared. He attempts to turn back, throws himself to the left, to the right, and now the sands are to his knees. Horror grows as he sees himself caught, and he tries to help by disposing of his burden, as a ship lightens her cargo when in distress. It is already too late. No help is in sight, and slowly but surely the agony increases until the horrible end comes. Even so it is with those who are caught in the quicksands of sin.

(4) Prosperity must not lead to pride and apostasy and rebellion, but to gratitude and love and loyalty and service (36-39). These chapters tell of the time when the Assyrians came down like a wolf on the fold, and made demands which drove Hezekiah to prayer.

God answered, and the Assyrians withdrew, only to come again. At their second approach, and while they were besieging Libnah, the death angel claimed 185,000 soldiers in one night and wrought havoc among them. The king and those who escaped the plague fled from Palestine to their own country, and there the Assyrian ruler met death at the hand of an assassin, and was followed on the throne by his son.

Later, when Hezekiah fell sick and was near to death, God answered his prayer again, for Hezekiah was a pious king and did not follow in the steps of his father Ahaz. Jehovah added fifteen years to his life and gave him the token of divine favor on the dial. The king wrote a song of thanksgiving, and gave praise to the Lord. As is so often the case, the good man became proud and fell into presumption. Spies who came as ambassadors from Babylon to congratulate him were shown all of the treasures and all of the armor, and went back well informed as to all the affairs of the kingdom.

His heart had been lifted up through pride, and good and wise as he was, one blessing and favor after another had so turned his head that he fell into the snare of the enemy. Presumption and pride are often followed by apostasy and rebellion, and these usually begin when gratitude and love and loyalty and service are wanting. A thorn in the flesh must come to save us from our own worst selves. The Great Physician, the Celestial Surgeon, does his work because he knows the patient will be blessed by the treatment and saved from error by the operation. The remnant left after we have passed through the furnace is as gold tried in the fire and takes readily the image of the Master.

2. Spiritual salvation is uppermost in the further

prophecies of Isaiah (40-66). The first verses are a fitting introduction to "The Book of Comfort," and assure those who are cast down that the way of the Lord is being prepared, that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and that the Word of the Lord shall stand forever. The herald is coming, sins will be pardoned, and there shall be a new and glorious revelation of Jehovah to his people. The prophet has been warning the people against sin and its terrible results, and he turns now to the divine provision for deliverance from sin.

(1) This salvation is to come from a merciful and a faithful God (40-48). God's people will be delivered from captivity, will be restored to their place, and will know that all along the mighty Jehovah has been tender, that the conquering King has been the good Shepherd, and that the wise and just God has been their strength in their individual and in their national life. Restoration must come for (a) God's promises are sure, (b) God's power is unlimited, (c) God's Servant will teach the true religion, and (d) God's holiness and righteousness are unfailing. He has not forgotten his people. He has chosen and he will not cast away. He is their God, and he will be with them and will help them and will uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness. He has redeemed them, and will be with them when they pass through the deep waters. The rivers shall not overflow them, neither shall the flames kindle upon them.

It is told of William Jay when he was a young preacher and was delivering a sermon before the Baptist Missionary Society of London, that he said he had his doubts as to whether the gospel could get hold of the idolatrous and savage people. Grand old John

Newton, a miracle of grace and of the longsuffering of God, arose, and gathering his coat more closely about him and addressing himself to Mr. Jay, said, "My brother, since the Lord saved poor old John Newton I can never doubt his power to save the heathen." Surely, Jehovah's faithfulness to the chosen people must lead us to say that "He who did not withhold even his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not also with him freely give us all things?"

(2) This salvation is to come through a suffering servant (40-53). Dr. John R. Sampey says, that if this prophecy and teaching be conceived of as a pyramid, the base will be Israel in its totality as a nation, that higher up is a better Israel as represented in its prophets and other spiritual men, and that at the apex is One, the Second Israel, as he was the Second Adam and the Second David, the Messiah. Jehovah through a suffering people was to bring back a suffering remnant, and Jehovah's love is to reach its full and final revelation in Jesus, God's own Son and our Savior.

New features are added to the portrait of the coming King, who will forever answer the charges made by Zion against Jehovah that he has forgotten and forsaken her. The Lord says a mother may forget the child of her womb, but that he will never forget the people whom he holds in his heart and whose name he has graven in the palms of his hands. He calls upon them to remember the covenant made, to learn that it is their sin which has brought sorrow upon them, and that they have not been divorced from him. They are realizing their sin and slavery and are praying for deliverance, and Jehovah is calling upon them to awake and to forsake sin and to look forward in trust to the coming of the promised Messiah.

"No peace to the wicked," "no peace to the wicked!" This is the refrain in the great oratorio of the Messiah, which is here given with such clearness and in such detail. Dr. Pierson, speaking of the fifty-third chapter as the middle chapter of this middle book of the great prophetic poem, the very heart of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, says, "The central verse of this central chapter enshrines the central truth of the gospel, that he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

The deity and the divine equipment of the Messiah will bring astonishment; the sufferings and the shame and humiliation will lead to his rejection by the world; to those who discern and who accept the atonement being made, who realize that his suffering is for the sins of others, there will be redemption and ultimate and glorious triumph. The promise of the Messianic King was accepted and cherished by the chosen people, but they were unwilling to accept the humiliation and suffering through which redemption and the eternal kingdom were to come. So when Jesus did appear as the Suffering Servant they rejected him as their Messiah and King.

(3) The joy of this salvation could be realized only through repentance and faith and obedience (54-59). For a small moment the Lord had seemingly forsaken his people, with great mercies he would gather them. The mountains might depart and the hills be removed, but his kindness would not depart from them. They are only being taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace which shall come to them in righteousness. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to

the waters, and he that hath no money, come and buy and eat. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God who will abundantly pardon. This call and this promise are for the heathen as well as for Israel, for the Gentiles are to be saved through the atoning work of the Messiah and are to be subjects of his kingdom. Jehovah's gracious plans and purposes are unfailing and are sufficient for all.

The sins of the people are beyond words to properly depict. Their apostasy and adultery and idolatry and irreverence and covetousness and sloth and doubt and rebellion and sins of commission and omission and disposition and state have already brought them to the depths of disaster and suffering. Surely they are ready to put away sin, to trust in the Lord, and with humility to obey the commands of Jehovah and walk in the way of truth.

William Carey's memorable sermon, which was delivered at Nottingham in June of 1792, and which marked an epoch in the history of the world, showed how the bride of Christ was seen as a poor widow forlorn and childless, living in some tent and seemingly desolate and forsaken. She was told to expect such an increase in her family as would require a larger dwelling, for her Maker was her husband and was not only the Lord of hosts and the Holy One of Israel, but the God of the whole earth. Therefore she (a) should expect great things from God, and (b) attempt great things for God. She should lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of her dwelling.

(4) This salvation is made sure and will be completed by divine power and grace (60-66). The

coming Messiah will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation will be upon his head. He will wear the garments of vengeance, he will be clad with zeal as a cloak, and his name shall be feared from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. This King shall reign over Jew and Gentile, the high ideals of his laws shall be the standard for all people, the cause which he espouses shall be imperishable, and the word of his grace is the one thing on earth that cannot be brought to naught.

There will be no excusing of wrong, but the Lord will himself purge them from sin, and will through the remnant bring in that coming day to which the chosen people have been looking. The ideal Zion, with its peace and felicity and righteousness, is to be brought to fulfilment through Jehovah's Servant, and in him are the good tidings for the afflicted and freedom for the captives. Israel is to be restored, and the restored Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, is to be beyond any earthly power to conceive or words to describe. One day, in the day of Messiah's triumph, the religions of the world will be seen in the light of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Then the world will unite in the enthronement of Christ, and all will see the safety and the glory of Zion. The sinning and unbelieving will be cast out, but the penitent and trusting shall come from the ends of the earth and shall live with their Lord and the redeemed, and shall know and enjoy the limitless blessings of divine grace and wisdom and power.

Admiral Dewey in his autobiography said near the close of the book, "A gratifying feature of the rank of the Admiral of the Navy, which Congress has given me, was that I was to remain in active service for

life. While I lived there would be work to do." This hope and desire of Admiral Dewey was fulfilled, and we know that worthy work is a joy always to those who are worth while. It is drudgery and not work that hurts. Salvation does not mean idleness here and will not mean a cessation of activity in the world to come. Those who are laborers together with God shall not only have the reward of faithfulness and be where all tears shall be wiped away, but they are assured that in the eternities ahead of them they shall know their Savior and be like him and that "His servants shall serve him."

How costly is sin! What blessings must one give up in order to be lost! What sacrifices of truest gain people often make in order to possess that which moth and rust can consume and which thieves are able to get to and steal! Admiral Farragut tells the story of his youth and of the turning point in his life, the time when he was led to see the costliness of sin. "When I was ten years old I was with my father on board a man-of-war. I had some qualities that I thought made a man of me. I could swear like an old salt, could drink as stiff a glass of grog as if I had doubled Cape Horn, and could smoke like a locomotive. I was great at cards, and was fond of gaming in every shape. At the close of dinner one day my father turned everybody out of the cabin, locked the door, and said to me, 'David, what do you mean to be?' 'I mean to follow the sea.' 'Follow the sea; yes, to be a poor, miserable, drunken sailor before the mast. To be kicked and cuffed about the world, and die in some fever hospital in a foreign land. No, David, no boy ever trod the quarter deck with such principles as you have, and such habits as you exhibit.

You will have to change your whole course of life if you are ever to become a man.' My father left me and went on deck. I was stunned by the rebuke, and overwhelmed with mortification. 'A poor, miserable, drunken sailor before the mast; be kicked and cuffed about the world and die in some foreign hospital. That is to be my fate,' thought I. 'I'll change my life and change it at once. I'll never utter another oath, I will never drink another drop of intoxicating liquor, I will never gamble.' I have kept these three vows ever since. Shortly after I made them I became a Christian. That act was the turning point in my destiny."

"Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited. Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance and frugality and industry, to justice and kindness and charity toward his fellowmen, and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God. In this commonwealth no man would impair his health by gluttony, drunkenness, or lust; no man would sacrifice his precious time to cards, or any other trifling amusements; no man would steal, or lie, or in any way defraud his neighbor, but would live in peace and good will with all men; no man would blaspheme his Maker, or profane his worship; but a rational, manly, sincere, and unaffecting piety and devotion would reign in all hearts." These are the wise words written in the diary of John Adams, who was the second president of the United States.

7: JEREMIAH

(1) *Jeremiah from the priestly line.*
(2) *His unfailing efforts to save the people.*
(3) *The martyr prophet of Israel.*
(4) *Jeremiah's contemporaries and fellow-helpers.*
(5) *His faithful and fearless ministry.*

I. JEREMIAH HAD A DEFINITE CALL.

1 He was given a definite task.

2 He was promised divine help.

II. JEREMIAH WAS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

1 He spared not even his own people.

2 He stated definitely their wrongs.

III. JEREMIAH SPOKE THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

1 He did not withhold the truth.

2 He suffered unto tears in giving his message.

IV. JEREMIAH WARNED AGAINST COMPROMISE WITH SIN.

1 Lying prophets were no excuse for sin.

2 The Jews must not presume on privilege.

V. JEREMIAH FAILED NOT TO SPEAK WORDS OF COMFORT.

1 God's remnant would be kept and blessed.

2 God's covenant was an everlasting covenant.

VI. JEREMIAH HAD CONFIDENCE IN JEHOVAH.

1 That he would punish the wicked.

2 That he would reward the righteous.

3 That he would preserve his own word.

4 That he would fulfil his every promise to Jerusalem, the Jews, the nations, the Messiah.

Bible—"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Milton—"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Norton—"They serve God well who serve his creatures."

Penn—"Men are beside themselves when they trangress against their convictions."

Goethe—"I will listen to any one's convictions, but pray keep your doubts to yourself."

Tacitus—"Truth is strengthened by observation and time, pretences by haste and uncertainty."

Emerson—"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."

Collier—"We must not let go manifest truths because we cannot answer all questions about them."

Lytton—"Strike from mankind the principle of faith, and men would have no more history than a flock of sheep."

7: JEREMIAH

or

THE PROPHET WHO BECAME A MARTYR FOR THE FAMILY

Contrary to the ideals of his race, Jeremiah was commanded not to take unto him a wife and not to have sons or daughters. Thus the prophet would give added emphasis to the calamities which were being foretold, and thus too would he be spared the sorrows which must come with their grievous deaths from the sword and from famine, and from seeing their bodies cast out and consumed by the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. Jeremiah was to be the man of God who each day would accompany his own people to their execution, and to one of so sympathetic and timid a nature the task was to be one of continual martyrdom.

Jeremiah was decended from the priestly line and lived in Anathoth, a village located just north of Jerusalem. He came to the nation when it was in a bad state and when it was growing worse. The ruin of the nation was checked by the reign of Josiah. For thirty-one years the good king reigned, and with the help of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Zephaniah and Habakkuk some great reforms were undertaken. The temple was cleansed, the Book of the Law was found, and there seemed to be signs that the nation would give

heed and be spared. Jehoahaz, the successor of Josiah, was deposed by Pharaoh Necho and the selfish, luxurious, contemptuous Jehoiakim was given his brother's place. He it was who dared to throw Jeremiah's prophecies into the fire, and who later died during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Led by their kings, the people were wedded to their sins, idolatry was practiced without shame, and such a carnival of vice and of evil was on that the prophecies and warnings and entreaties of Jeremiah were of no avail. Egypt and Assyria were seeking to be world powers, and the land of the Jews was between them, and the Jewish kings were hoping to save themselves by some unholy alliance with one or the other. Babylon won, and became the mistress of the world; Assyria and Egypt were shattered; and Jeremiah told his people of their folly in contending with the victorious Babylonians without the help of Jehovah. He told the Jews of their ingratitude and disobedience, and saw no hope for them; but looking beyond the sinning of his own people, and the might of the heathen nations, he told of the rise of the Kingdom of the Messiah in which justice and righteousness and peace would prevail.

Jeremiah, the martyr prophet, received his call while very young. Very early he went to Jerusalem to proclaim God's message, and five years after his call at the time when the book of the law was found he made a tour of Judah, and so preached against the sins of the day and so offended his countrymen by his proclamations and warnings that they sought to kill him. He left Anathoth and took up his abode at Jerusalem, and was in favor there during the time of Josiah's reign. When Jehoiakim came to power it was different, the

slumbering resentment broke out against him, and the priests and people and prophets brought Jeremiah before the authorities, demanding that he be put to death for what they claimed was treachery, but which was in truth the sincerest love and the truest loyalty. He was kept from death by Ahikam and other princes, but for the time at least he was forced into silence.

Not being able to go into the house of Jehovah, due to his imprisonment, he wrote out his predictions, and Baruch, his amanuensis, acted as his spokesman and read the prophecies to the people. The princes again saved Jeremiah and Baruch from death, and bade them hide themselves until the anger of the wicked king had subsided. The king was so enraged at the words of the prophet, that with a knife he cut the manuscripts to pieces and burned them in the fire and gave orders for the apprehension of the prophet and his helper. Urijah, another prophet, was put to death, but Jeremiah and Baruch escaped.

During the brief reign of Johoiachin, the next ruler, Jeremiah foretold the capture and deportation of the queen-mother and the king, and this time the prophet was put into prison by Pashur, the chief governor of the temple, and this incarceration did not end until Zedekiah came to the throne and sent for him to enquire concerning Nebuchadnezzar's desires against Jerusalem. The princes became irritated at Jeremiah's warnings against the treachery of the Egyptians, for the prophet had said that though the Chaldeans had withdrawn at the approach of Pharaoh's army, they would return and would destroy the city. Jeremiah was charged with deserting to the Chaldeans, was again imprisoned, and would have been left there to

starve in the dungeon had it not been for the Ethiopian, Ebed-Melech, who interceded for him.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered that Jeremiah be set free, and gave him his choice of remaining with those who were left of his people, or of going to Babylon. The persecution and injustice of forty years had not changed his love for his people and for Jerusalem, and he showed his loyalty by staying with the remnant. When the rebellion broke out against Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had placed in authority, and when those who led in the murder of the ruler fled to Egypt for safety, they forced Baruch and Jeremiah to accompany them, and that too in spite of the prophet's warning against departure from Judea. On the journey at Tahpanhes, one of the Nile valley cities, Jeremiah predicted the downfall of Egypt. Tradition says that he died during his enforced exile, and maybe at the hands of the people of Tahpanhes. There is a tradition also that his bones were removed to Alexandria, and the Jews until the time of Jesus persisted in saying that one day they would be blessed by the return of Jeremiah.

The contemporaries of this man of God were Zephaniah, and Habakkuk and Ezekiel and Daniel, but there was more in common between Jeremiah and Ezekiel than any of the others. They were far apart in their places of ministry, but they were in substance doing the same service, though their modes of expression and their characteristics were in striking contrast. As one author puts it, "The one represents the spectacle of the power of divine inspiration acting on a mind naturally of the firmest texture, and at once subduing to itself every element of the soul; whilst the other furnishes an example, not less memorable, of moral

courage sustained by the same divine inspiration against the constantly opposing influence of a love of retirement and strong susceptibility to impressions of outward evil."

Jeremiah was faithful and fearless in spite of reproaches, threats, insults, imprisonments. He was forced by the call of truth and duty and against his disposition into public life and into perils and suffering. He had much to say as to the Book of the Law, which in his time had been rediscovered, and the word of Jehovah made him strong against the pliable false prophets, who were willing to say smooth things if only they might remain in favor with the people. Pathos and tenderness, plain speech and sublimity of thought, moral courage and timidity and fineness of feeling find varying expression in this wonderful book of prophecy.

Jeremiah lived a life of continual martyrdom for the people of Jehovah, and as we listen to his preaching, as we feel the force of his abiding loyalty to God and to his Word and to his people, as we see the fineness of his nature and the beauty of his soul, as we follow him into peril and prison and even death, we are led to sing,

"Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!

"Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee."

1. This man who was willing to be many times a martyr had a divine call, a call so definite and so clear, that he put it down as the beginning and the occasion of his sacrificial life (1 : 1-19). It was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, telling him that he had been set apart and ordained of God to speak for him. The young preacher's son said, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child," but the Lord made reply, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

Jeremiah's first message is made known to him in two visions. One is that of the almond tree, the first of the trees to blossom, and which by the Romans is called "vigilant," "watchful," because it is awake when the others are still taking their winter sleep. It is an emblem of activity, alertness, and Jehovah is saying that he is near at hand, though he will be quick to fulfil his word. The other vision is that of the boiling caldron, a seething pot, and the face of it is from the north, leaning toward the south. The Babylonian power will be spilling its contents of oppression and rapine toward Judah.

Jehovah promises to stand by Jeremiah, and commands that he gird up his loins, and go forth and speak all that has been entrusted to him, and not to be dismayed at their faces lest the Lord confound him before them. Should he be faithful, then the Lord would make him as a defenced city and an iron pillar and as brazen walls against those who might oppose him, and that it mattered not who might try to with-

stand him, still Jehovah would be with him, to deliver. In proportion to our faithfulness are we likely to incur the disfavor of the wicked and the easeloving, and also in that same proportion have we promise of the favor and blessings of God.

John Chrysostom, the preacher with the golden mouth, is much the same kind of man as Jeremiah. When the Roman emperor said to Chrysostom that he would banish him, his reply was, "Thou canst not for the world is my Father's house." "Then," said the emperor, "I will kill thee." The answer of the preacher was, "That is not in thy power, for my life is hid with Christ in God." Then the ruler threatened, "I will deprive thee of all thou possessest." Chrysostom again replied, and said, "That too is impossible, for my treasure is in heaven, and my riches are within me." The ruler said, "I will separate thee from all thy companions, and thou shalt not have one friend left." The man of God answered, "Neither canst thou do that, for my divine friend will never leave me and is one from whom none can ever sever me. I defy thee, proud emperor; thou canst do me no harm at all."

2. The man with the martyr spirit was not a respector of persons, and did not fail of his duty simply because the message would hurt those who were dear to him (2-6). Here Jeremiah is speaking plainly to his own people and is warning them not to rely on Egypt. He is reminding them of their former loyalty to Jehovah and of the divine favor which followed, and at the same time does not fail to denounce their idolatry and to tell them of the consequent judgments which must come upon them. He charged the people with the forsaking of their own God, the true God for false gods, and that they were ungrateful, that they

had broken their covenants, that they were wilfully persistent in their idolatrous practices, that they had gone to the extent of murdering even the innocent, and that they seemed not to care for the depths of sin to which they had come.

Jeremiah told Judah that her guilt was far greater than was true of other nations, because of the clearer revelation which she had, and the example of Israel was cited to show what must come if the nation failed to repent. This time the destroyer from the north was represented as a terrible lion, as a desolating storm, and before him the whole land would be made utterly desolate. They had forsaken the fountain of living waters, and had hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water. It was an evil thing and bitter that they had forsaken Jehovah, that they had said to a stock, "Thou art my father"; and to a stone, "Thou hast brought me forth."

Judah had played the harlot with many lovers, but Jehovah was calling and saying, "Return again to me." Backsliding Israel and treacherous Judah had not gone beyond God's mercy, and the command of the Lord was, "Go and proclaim these words to the north, and say, 'Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord.'" Both Israel and Judah were called to repentance, and were promised mercy, if they would but put away their abominations and would return unto Jehovah and to the true and spiritual worship.

The prophet was ordered to go through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places, and see if he could find a man who executed judgment and who sought after the truth, but his search was unavailing and none could be found who was faithful to Jehovah.

They need not be surprised then at the disasters which must come upon a treacherous and wicked people, who have deserted the true God for idols and who have given themselves to adultery and impiety and corruption and to contempt for Jehovah and his worship. They have filled their houses with deceit as a cage is full of birds, they judge not the cause of the fatherless; they set snares to catch men; they overpass the wicked in their vile deeds; their prophets prophesy falsely, the priests take into their hands the rulership, and worse still the people love to have it so. Jeremiah calls to Benjamin, and warns him that great destruction is coming out of the north, and the prophet exhorts the people as follows, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

They replied, "We will not walk therein," "We will not harken," and Jehovah announces through his servant that a cruel and heartless and powerful enemy would soon be upon them. "They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion." "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us." Jeremiah does not spare rulers, or princes, or priests, or Israel, or Judah, or his own people of Anothoth and Benjamin. He was no respecter of persons.

One of the most difficult tasks a devoted son ever had was to privately talk to his own good father about renting a room for a saloon, and to let it be known that no matter how much the rent might be, God was

not pleased; that the thing to do was to trust in the Lord and do good, and he would see that food was supplied and that all needs were met. The son of a saloon keeper in a Canadian mining town was converted, but was refused membership in a Baptist church, because his surroundings and his life had been such as to give no promise of worth. He continued to attend church and prayer-meeting, and was finally given a place in work with the young people and was accepted for membership, became a great Christian worker, a faithful and effective and beloved pastor, and at this writing is secretary for all of the Baptist work in the State of Oklahoma.

3. Jeremiah was no respecter of persons, but faithful as he was in speaking the truth it was done in tenderness and sympathy and love (7-13). One day near the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign when a great public feast was being observed, the prophet took his stand at the gate of the temple where the crowd of out-of-town visitors would be among his auditors, and denounced the idolatry into which the nation had relapsed under the bad influence of the new king. As the people passed through the gate leading into the court of the women and through the gate by which they entered the outer court and court of the Gentiles, Jeremiah warned them against their vain confidence, denounced their idolatry, spurned the sacrifices of the disobedient, exhorted them to mourn for their abominations, upbraided their folly and shamelessness, and grieved over their desperate state and their certain calamity.

No martyr ever suffered more with his people than did Jeremiah. He weeps with them over their suffering and sin and desolation. Jehovah has refused him

permission to plead for Jerusalem and has told him that his message will not be heeded. The sins of the nation are ripening fast, and they will soon be in mourning, and high and low and rich and poor and wise and ignorant are all to suffer together. He reminds them of the folly of worshiping a tree cut out of the forest and shaped by the hands of men, and decked with silver and gold, and fastened with nails and hammers so that it cannot move. He proclaims to the people God's covenant, tells how their fathers were disloyal to it, and reminds them that they are walking in evil and dangerous paths. The wicked may flourish for a time, but Jehovah knows and will in the fulness of time pluck up and destroy those who persist in being impenitent.

"What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" What answer will be possible? The punishment of the people will be in kind, says Jeremiah, as is true with an adulteress when her skirts are thrown over her head and her person is exposed. The Jews have so persistently sinned, their habits of immorality and idolatry have become as much a part of them as is the Ethiopian's skin, and nothing remains but to send them from their own country, to scatter them as stubble before the wind of the wilderness, where it has full sweep and where there is no obstacle to break its force.

"Oh, that my head were waters," said the prophet as he told of the sins and the sorrows of his nation, "and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people!" The knife of the surgeon is sharp and cuts deep and causes pain, but we are grateful for the life saved and prolonged and made strong and virile. The

waking by the fireman is rude and sharp and imperative, but we are thankful for the escape of our loved friends from the horrible holocaust. The chastening and training by our parents seems oftentimes harsh and strict, but how we love them for having cared for us enough to be faithful, much as it cost them to use the rod on those whom they loved best and for whom they would willingly have given their own lives.

4. The martyr prophet knew the danger of compromising with sin. He realized that diverging paths may be much the same at first, and that two houses may seemingly be just alike until their foundations are tested by storms and flood (14-21). Lying prophets are no excuse for the Jews. They should have known the truth. Sin and partial obedience should have been spurned by them. The deceitful heart could not deceive God. Their love for wickedness could not be excused by the conduct of their fathers. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and the Lord is the searcher of hearts, and gives to every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

The Jews must not presume on their privileges as God's chosen people and think that they can violate his commandments with impunity. If the potter had the right to cast off the poor clay which was marred in the moulding and to return and make it into another vessel, then surely Jehovah will be justified in turning away from the people who have proved unfaithful to his mercies and blessings and in raising up others who are ready to do his will. Isaiah had written, "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, 'What makest thou?'" As a potter's vessel they will be dashed to pieces because of their unwillingness to yield to their

Maker, and their punishment will not be due to any lack of gracious design on the part of Jehovah, but will be the result of righteous judgment against ingratitude and pride and rebellion and wickedness.

A potter's vessel was taken to the alley of Hinnom and was broken in the presence of the elders and priests, and was declared to be the symbol of the impending doom. In return for this prophecy Pashur smote Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks. Pashur was the highest officer of the temple, and Jeremiah tells him that his name will no longer be Pashur, "largeness and security," but rather Magormissabib, "terror round about," that fear and ruin will come upon him and upon all of his friends, terror coming from the failure of the false prophecies and from the judgments of Jehovah upon treachery and duplicity and impiety. Jeremiah in spite of his reluctance was moved of God to cry out against violence and spoil. The word of Jehovah burning in his heart as a fire must find expression, and the prophet says that even those friends who were as guards at his side watched for some halting mistake or sin on the part of the prophet, that they might take revenge on him.

Zedekiah, a prince who still had reverence for Jehovah and for sacred things, sent messengers to Jeremiah to enquire concerning the second advance of the Chaldeans against Jerusalem. He is anxious to know if Jehovah will give deliverance from this Babylonian invasion, and Jeremiah must again be the bearer of the just sentence of the Lord against sin. The city of Jerusalem is doomed, the Jews must reap the harvest of their sowing, and all those of the king's family must pay the penalty for their impiety.

Mr. Spurgeon tells of a visit to Hanover where he

saw the unfinished palace of the deposed monarch. The partly built spacious and most costly home for the king was standing as a monument to a forfeited glory, and the carriages of state and the stables of cream-colored horses had about them the atmosphere of disappointment and failure. Here were the emblems of sovereignty and the insignia of royalty, but there was no king. The monarch was an exile. Even so had Jehovah given the Jewish nation a promised land and a glorious city and a throne of grace and power, but they had proved themselves unworthy and even now the Chaldean armies were preparing to be the administrators of divine justice.

5. Jeremiah's continual martyrdom for the sake of his nation fits him to speak words of consolation as well as words of warning (22-33). Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord, and I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase; and I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. False prophets were leading Jehovah's people astray and were also examples of evil, and these false leaders together with those who were eager for such excuses to sin would be sure to find that wickedness would mar and rot the life as the Euphrates had marred and had made good for nothing the linen girdle which the prophet had buried in its mud and slime.

In the vision of the basket of figs Jeremiah con-

trasts the decaying and the good, and because for nearly a quarter of a century they had persistently gone on in sin, captivity was surely coming upon them. They might arrest and imprison God's spokesman, but they could not stay God's judgments. They might break the yoke of wood which the prophet wore as a symbol of their subjection to Babylon, but Hannaniah is told that the yoke of their captors will be of iron. Still, even in their captivity there came to them from Jeremiah a letter of counsel and comfort, stating that though their exile was not to be soon ended, they could always cling to Jehovah's covenant promise and to his unchanging ultimate purpose. The Jews will be restored, and their deliverance will be another pledge of their final and spiritual deliverance, and they shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest, for Jehovah has again said, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." He who has scattered Israel knows where to find them, and how to discipline them, and when they will be ready to come back. We know today that they are still a distinct people, and for these many centuries have been the perpetual fulfilment of prophecy and the standing miracle of God's abiding and ultimate purpose.

While in prison and when captivity was impending Jehovah commanded the prophet to buy some patrimonial property in his home town of Anathoth, a field belonging to a first cousin. This property could not go out of the limits of their Levitical family, but could be bought by Jeremiah, and this he was to do to signify the restoration of his people and of their land holdings. They shall be carried away captive, but Jehovah will bring back the remnant, and in the fulness of time the

Messiah will come and will set up an everlasting kingdom.

Jeremiah suffered on account of the sins and the sorrows and defeats of Jerusalem and of the nation, but his face was to the future and to final victory. As was said by the guide concerning Chinese Gordon's statue, in which the statesman and warrior and Christian patriot is seated upon his dromedary and is facing the south:—"They set him looking not toward the palace where he lived, not toward the Nile where he might have escaped, but toward the Soudan for which he died; and he is waiting, sir, for morning to dawn over the Soudan." Israel's morning was sure to come, and the weeping martyr prophet could still hold out hope to his blundering and blinded and misguided and sinning people.

6. Jeremiah's long years of martyrdom were made possible because of his abiding confidence in Jehovah (34-51). The holy and righteous God would surely punish sin, and Zedekiah was a striking example of this for he could not escape and would be carried a prisoner to Babylon. The Jews had enslaved their fellows, and this violation of the Mosaic law became the subject of a message from the man of God. They agreed to right the wrong, but when the threatened siege of the city was lifted they re-enslaved them, and such perfidy was an abomination to Jehovah and brought their own enslavement to a heathen nation as well as the burning and desolation of their beloved city.

The holy and righteous God would surely reward obedience and faithfulness, and to give a concrete illustration of this the Rechabites were cited. They made a practice of total abstinence from drink, and the

prophet brought them into the house of the Lord, and there set before them wine and cups and bade them partake of it. They refused, and said, "We will drink no wine for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever." The Lord was so pleased with their faithfulness that he pronounced upon them a never failing blessing, and Jeremiah urged that his people be as faithful to the commands of Jehovah as these Rechabites were to the wishes of their father.

Confidence in the Lord was well placed as seen in the preservation of his word which was given through the prophet. The king might cut it to pieces and burn it in the fire, but God would give his truth again to his servant and it should be rewritten. He will preserve those who are loyal to that truth, and those who oppose and who attempt to destroy it will only hasten and intensify their own doom. To Jehoiakim the message of Jehovah came saying, "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the hoar, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them; and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them."

The later chapters of the book of Jeremiah bring before us the fulfilment of other prophecies concerning the final capture of Jerusalem; concerning the poor and miserable ones left in the land under the rule of Gedaliah; concerning those who fled to Egypt, saying that Nebuchadnezzar would conquer it also, and that idolatry in this far away land would not fail of punishment; concerning the nations which had dealings with

God's people, and that as a book weighted with stone would sink in the Euphrates, so would even that great nation, Babylon, go down when weighted with idolatry and sin and with injustice toward Jehovah's chosen nation. The last chapter tells of the fulfilment of the predictions made by Jeremiah on account of Zedekiah's rebellion; of Jerusalem and its siege and downfall; of the king of Babylon who slew the sons of Zedekiah while he looked on, and then put out his eyes and bound him in chains and carried him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death; of the carrying away of the secred vessels and the wealth of the temple; of the sad and complete loss to the Jews of all power and of their being carried away in captivity to a foreign and heathen and idolatrous land whence some day they would return to rebuild their city and prepare the world's stage for the entrance of the promised Messiah.

Sin and idolatry and compromise and adultery and luxury and position and pleasure did not then and does not now bring satisfaction. One of the popular writers of the day tells of the happiest person he had met. He thought that surely Mark Twain would be a happy man, for his drolleries had brought laughter to multitudes of others, but after intimate association with the great humorist he learned that underneath the seeming fun were melancholy and misery, and that he was one of the most unhappy men of his acquaintance. He lacked the spiritual eye, he had no bridge of faith across which could come to him the messengers of comfort and peace. Carnegie also was lacking in the great blessing of contentment and of peace. The great steel baron just as the rich young ruler was sadly lacking, and said of his riches, "I am thinking that the

time is near when I must leave it all. I would like to trade most of my treasure for a guaranty of twenty years of life and health."

The writer of the article just referred to said that the happiest person he had known was not among the wealthy and cultured and prominent, but was an old woman whom he found in a valley of the great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina. Her life was full of hardships, but also full of service, and always in her voice and look and manner was the unmistakable note of happiness. A part of her story only can be given here, but it tells something of the secret of that peace which passes all understanding.

She says:—"We had nine children. Sunday mornin's in the summer I'd be up early, an' milk an' git breakfast an' the children ready. Then we'd leg hit off three mile to Sunday school. Git home in time to git dinner. The sun would be hot on the little uns comin' back. We'd have to pick up the littlest an' carry em 'gin we got home. If I were 'lone I'd be totin' three to onct part o' the way. A'ter a while my sister broke down an' I tuk her five little uns 'gin she got better, which she never done. My brother died of tyfoid fever an' I tuk his two babies an' brought 'em up. I asked the Lord to holp me, an' he done hit. When I knowed he were holpin' me I were happy, mister, an no burden were too much for me to b'ar. I could go an' holp the neighbors who had sick uns. 'Pears like the strength o' Samson were in my body. Sometimes the neighbors would send for me to git the blues tuk off 'em, an' I'd go an' pray with 'em an' nurse the sick, an' tell 'em stories an' cheer 'em up."

The searcher after the happiest person he could find asked this mountain woman, "How could you keep

yourself happy through those hard years?" Her answer was, "How could I help it, mister, with the peace o' God in my heart, an' the children to love and work fur?" This study of Jeremiah may well close with the comment of the magazine writer. "It is true today, as it was centuries ago, that the happiest men and women are those who love God with all their heart and soul and mind and body, and loving their fellowmen as themselves delight to serve them."

Dr. A. J. Gordon tells of a man in Boston who was apparently a hopeless drunkard, and who over and over again would sign a total abstinence pledge, and then in the hour of temptation would go down in defeat and be found in the gutter. This went on repeating itself until in a great evangelistic meeting the man really was converted. Those who knew of his past experience were afraid he would go down again as he had done in the past, but to their amazement and gratification the days and weeks and months passed by, and the former drunkard continued to live an increasingly victorious life. One day Dr. Gordon met him and said, "They tell me that at last you have gotten the mastery of the devil." His reply was, "No, I haven't gotten the mastery of the devil, but I have gotten the Master of the devil."

The family is indeed incurably religious, and their long exile in a foreign land among the worshipers of idols has only intensified their reverence for true worship and their longing for a temple dedicated to Jehovah. The religious instinct can never be displaced by philosophy or philanthropy or art or law, for man made in the image of God will forever seek to regain that from which he has fallen. All religions are the gropings of peoples blinded by sin, and are the insis-

tent urge of the souls of mankind seeking the light and life and love and liberty of the sons of God. The whole creation, we are told, is groaning together in the pains of childbirth, and that we also, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste and pledge of the glorious future, yet we ourselves inwardly sigh as we wait and long for open recognition as sons, through the deliverance of our bodies, as of prisoners of war reduced to slavery, whose ransom has now been paid and whose freedom has now been purchased.

8: LAMENTATIONS

(1) *The lamentable condition of the Jews.*
(2) *The lamenting prophet, Jeremiah.*
(3) *"Is it nothing to you?"*

I. THAT SIN IS SO EXCEEDING SINFUL?

1 Jerusalem's condition is terrible proof.

2 Are we toying with sin?

II. THAT CHASTENING MUST SURELY COME?

1 Jehovah did not spare Zion.

2 We need not expect exemption.

III. THAT GOD'S MERCY IS THE ONLY HOPE?

1 He has spared and he only can heal.

2 The gospel shows that he is rich in mercy.

IV. THAT PRESENT AND PAST CONDITIONS ARE IN SUCH SAD CONTRAST?

1 Indignities and injuries instead of position and honor.

2 Taking pleasure in wickedness is prediction of downfall.

V. THAT A NEW TURNING UNTO GOD IS NEEDED?

1 Repentance and prayer and trust will avail.

2 "In God We Trust." O America!

Bible—"Is it nothing to you?"

Milton—"Death from sin no power can separate."

Trench—"Sin may be clasped so close we cannot see its face."

Bryant—"God hath yoked to guilt her pale tormentor, misery."

Vane—"Suffer anything from man rather than sin against God."

Elliot—"I could not live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God."

Shakespeare—"We do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy."

8: LAMENTATIONS

or

SORROW OVER THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE FAMILY

"Every letter is written with a tear, and every word with the sound of a broken heart." The book of Lamentations is an appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah, and is his expression of grief over the calamities which had been brought upon his people because of their sins. Jerusalem is desolate, the temple is deserted, the worship of Jehovah has ceased, the nation is in captivity, and those who are left behind by the Chaldeans are facing the miseries of famine. The book is not only an example of the truest patriotism, but also of that sorrow for sin and that triumphant faith which betoken the true child of God.

The Septuagint has an introductory verse as follows:—"And it came to pass after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem was become desolate, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said, "How," (which in the Hebrew is "Eechah,"). "Eechah," "How," is the first word of these elegies of Jeremiah, and is the title more often used by the Jews, but the Septuagint called the book "Lamentations," and from this title we have derived the one now in use. The book is composed of five poems, and each one is an acrostic, based on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, though there is

variety in the arrangement, the letters being sometimes transposed and the stanzas being in groups of three lines or two lines as the thought demanded. This alphabetical arrangement was doubtless with a view to aiding the memory, and the twenty-two verses of chapters one and two and four and five and the sixty-six verses of chapter three are due to the use of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet as the basis of the acrostic.

The evident purpose of the prophet was that he might help his Jewish kinsmen in their great suffering and sorrow to humble themselves under the chastening of the Lord, and to bring back their hearts from their sins and rebellion, and to turn them again to Jehovah. Jehovah's longing was that the Jews would come in repentance and confession, that they would look to the Lord for pardon and for deliverance, and that they would no longer expect help from alliances with the heathen nations about them. The imagery is rich and beautiful and varied, and the form is a combination of poetry and prophecy. The book is sometimes placed by the Jews among the Chetuvim, the Holy Writings, such as the Psalms and Ruth and Ecclesiastes, and then again is found among the prophetical books.

Jeremiah had in the visions portrayed in his book of prophecy seen the coming of sorrow and suffering to his people. He had wished that his eyes were fountains of tears, as he realized what they must endure. They charged him with treachery because of his warnings and were most cruel to him, but this did not change his love to hate and did not prevent his "Lamentations" over the ruin which came. Now Jeremiah is weeping at the funeral of Jerusalem, and is bewailing the execution of the offending people who should have been free

and prosperous and happy. Judah had been over-run by heathen armies, and the pride of Jerusalem had been broken. The Jewish state is in captivity, the temple of Jehovah has been insulted, and the song of the Lord has ceased. These elegies by the prophet afforded most appropriate language in which the Jews could tell of their grief and probably helped much in preserving in Babylon the remembrance of Zion and in awakening the hope that God would be merciful and would deliver them from captivity and return them to their own city and country.

The political conditions given in the previous discussion of the book of Jeremiah still obtain, and the crash of thrones and empires is to be heard not only in Israel and Judah, but in Assyria and Egypt. The victorious Babylonians have now defeated the Pharaoh in the battle of Carchemish, and Babylon is now mistress of the world; but they too will fall after seventy years, and another new power will be put into the scales and will be found wanting. Judah without trust in God was helpless before the armies of Babylon, but the true kingdom of David would rise some day, and the covenant of the Lord would be kept by a people with new hearts in which righteousness and faithfulness and peace would reign.

Chapter one tells of the misery and affliction of the people and the plight of the city. Chapter two reminds us of the cause which brought such suffering and of the distress which must be upon them when Jehovah becomes their enemy. Chapter three deplores the calamities which have come upon the prophet, and contains his acknowledgment of God's justice and his prayer for forgiveness. Chapter four portrays the desolation of the city and the unhappy lot of Zedekiah,

the joy of their enemies over their downfall, and the assurance that restoration can come only with repentance. Chapter five is an appeal to Jehovah for mercy, is a recital of the sufferings of God's people, and a prayer for favor and restoration.

The key verse (1:12) says, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." "It is nothing to you?" This is the piteous plea of Jerusalem, not only to kinspeople and friends, but even to the strangers who may pass by and behold her in her desolation. In our study of the book with its "flow of that full and graceful and pathetic eloquence, in which the author pours out the effusions of a patriotic heart, and piously weeps over the ruins of his venerable country," the question is still repeated and becomes to us a call to thought and prayer and loyalty. Will it be necessary for our beloved and honored and trusted nation to weep over its failure, and to ask of the passing people, "Is it nothing to you?"

1. Is it nothing to you that sin is exceeding sinful, that God's people today are in another death struggle with the powers of evil, that it is again army against army and Zion against the world? (1:1-22). The prophet in this first alphabet, this first acrostic, is bewailing the miseries of Jerusalem and insistently urges that the cause of it all is the failure of the people to realize the sinfulness of sin, the failure to weed out the wrong while it is young, the unwillingness to listen to Jehovah before the certain harvest is come. Jerusalem now is solitary and empty of people. She is as a widow bereft. Her cheeks are wet with tears, and there is

no lover left to comfort her. Her former friends have now become her enemies. Her beauty is departed, her priests sigh over her fate, her virgins are afflicted, her adversaries mock at her sabbaths, and the heathen have defiled her sanctuary. The Jews are as oxen on whose neck the yoke has been placed, and the rope which holds them is so firmly twisted round the driver's hand that there is no loosening. Their mighty men have not fallen on the battlefield, but in the heart of the city, and this is only another sign of divine wrath. The Lord was righteous and had done no wrong in thus dealing with them, for they had been guilty of sin, grievous sin, and their only plea was for mercy and compassion.

Our day is one in which parents and children, pulpit and platform, legislator and jurist and officer are playing with wrong, and are failing to realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Two boys had been told that the third rail was dangerous, and the railroad company had taken pains at great cost to encase the menace in wood. One of the lads saw a piece of copper wire and thought it would be fun to see if there was really any truth in the report. He pushed the wire in under the covering, and said, "That's funny. I guess I didn't touch the right spot." He pushed the wire a little further, and there was a cry of pain, a flash of light, and a vain endeavor to turn loose the deadly wire. Another boy tried to help but was hurled to the ground, and the wise use of a rubber coat finally dragged the victim from the terrible voltage, but not until his clothing was on fire and his body horribly marked for life.

Young people and older people are just as foolish when they trifle with sin, for it is as deadly as is a live

third rail. Playing with dishonesty and gambling and passion and pride and drink is playing the fool, for sin burns and mars and kills even those who in ignorance are brought into contact with it. The individual, the family, the church, the city, the state, the nation, must hear and heed, or must feel and suffer. A father said again and again to his boys at school, "Be afraid of nothing except sin, but be dreadfully afraid of that." Trifle with your health if you will, neglect your studies, miss your opportunities for gain and for position, but do not trifle with sin. Take fire into your bosom, give a deadly snake opportunity to strike, open your door to a mad dog, tempt and invite the lightning, but do not trifle with sin.

A young business man was urged by a lady friend to attend the meetings which were being conducted in the city by a Cumberland Presbyterian evangelist. He replied with the statement that he had plenty of time for such things. He was rich and prominent and popular and young, but did not know how little time there was ahead of him. The meetings closed. He did not attend. It was his last opportunity. The next week he and other of his friends started on an excursion, and at one of the stations he left the train for a minute, and when it started again he was on the lowest step, leaning out and speaking to one of the party, when a switchboard struck him just back of the ear. He fell from the train and never spoke another word. It was a sad time in that beautiful home and to that devoted mother, when the special train stopped at the foot of the hill and the body was brought up to the house by sorrowing friends. What a sin it is to delay and presume!

When Charles Darwin was making a trip around

the world he visited Tierra del Fuego, the isle-abounding country to the extreme south of Chile and Argentina. He found there a wild and savage tribe, so low in the scale of humanity and so besotted and bestial, that no English ships were permitted to land, and the great scientist felt that here were human beings so backward and so degraded and so incapable as to offer a supreme challenge to civilization and to religion. One day in Bristol, England, a cast-off baby was found in the street. It was picked up on the day which some dedicate to "St. Thomas" and so he was called "Thomas," and the place where he was discovered was between two bridges and thus he was given the name of "Bridges." When he had grown to manhood he heard and answered the call to be a missionary, he offered to go to Tierra del Fuego, that place to which no missionary had ever been sent. Thomas Bridges went to this, his chosen field, and to this people so squalid and degraded. He lived among them as a messenger from God, and as a representative of the Savior, and as preacher of the gospel of grace. He won their confidence, he created a language for them, he translated the Bible so that they might read and know the story of love in Christ Jesus. It is told of Mr. Darwin, at a later time and when a much older man, that he heard the story of the work of Thomas Bridges among the people of Tierra del Fuego, and having publicly acknowledged his error as to the hopelessness of the power of the gospel to reach them, himself made a contribution to the cause of Christian missions.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the day of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes:

but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "The wages of sin is death." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown bringeth forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren."

2. It is nothing to you that chastening must surely come, that Jehovah must and will punish his own when they stray and sin and forget and rebel, that this is as true of nations as of individuals, that it is as certain for churches as for communities and homes? (2 : 1-22). In Hebrews we are told that all chastening seems at first to be grievous, but that afterward it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised thereby, that as surely as God loves so surely does he rebuke and chasten. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Jehovah has dashed Jerusalem and the Jews down from the heights of prosperity to the depths of misery. Their grief is not chiefly that they are in the midst of calamity, but that their God has become their enemy and that he is angry with them and is disappointed with them. Jehovah did not keep back his wrath even from Zion, and did not spare even the temple and the ark of the sanctuary. When the city fell the royal line ended and when the temple worship ceased the priestly office failed, and the captives in exile began to appreciate the blessings they had formerly enjoyed. The right hand of God was now withdrawn, and they were no longer receiving the help which he before gave them.

Sorrow and sadness have been increased; the tabernacle, which was God's hedge, has been violently taken

away; the foe's shout of triumph in the house of the Lord was a sad reminder of the jubilant thanksgivings which the Jews had uttered there; the gates were no longer a hindrance to the foe, for they were buried in the débris and in the rubbish. The prophet says that his eyes fail of tears, for he has wept until he can weep no more as he beholds the many who perish from famine, even children in their mother's arms, and as he sees the sword ruthlessly cut down priest and prophet, aged and young, male and female. Death was doing its work without regard to character or position or age or sex. False prophets deceived the people, their neighbors laughed at them and rejoiced in their humiliation, their enemies treated them with contempt and scorn, and the Lord turned against them. They have sown to the wind and have reaped the whirlwind.

The time often comes when the enemies of righteousness can mock and deride the churches for their sorrows, but the world does not distinguish between chastening and destruction. We may make it necessary for our God to let loose upon us the messengers of evil, and we may fall into the hands of the enemy to be sifted as was Simon, but in it all we have the promise of the Master that he ever liveth to intercede for us, and we have the assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

Elijah P. Brown, founder and editor of "Rams Horn," was a man who had a remarkable conversion from skepticism and was led to a place of great usefulness. He often told of his wickedness and of the sorrow caused by his wayward life. His father was poor, and when the runaway boy came back home sick he realized that his presence added to the struggle

for bread, and he determined to leave again. The father sought to keep him, but he would not listen and gave no heed to the father's entreaties to stay with him. Mr. Brown said that not until he was going away did he realize that his father really loved him.

His own account of the incident says, "As we parted he took me by the hand and with a voice trembling with emotion said, 'I never wanted to be rich before, my boy, as I do today. God knows it almost kills me to see you leaving home because your father is so poor. Don't go, my son, don't go; come back with me and help will surely come from somewhere, but as long as we have a crust there is a part of it for you.' But when he saw that he could not change my decision he said, 'Good-by; good-by; God bless you,' and then he turned and started home. But he only took a step or two when he turned and called my name, and as I looked I saw a tear leave his eye and wind down his cheek. It was the first tear I had ever seen my father shed for me. He put his hand in his pocket and took something out, and then next instant he pressed a fifty cent piece in my hand and turned and walked away. I knew then what I never knew before, that my father loved me. I knew that fifty cent piece was the last cent he had on earth, and in the gift I saw my father's heart. All day long something seemed to be singing in my heart, 'Father loves me! Father loves me!' and I determined then that I would make life easier for him, and from that hour I have never consciously caused him another pang."

3. Is it nothing to you that the mercy of God is the only hope of a sinning world, that the millions of suffering and dying people need the message of the unfailing mercies of the Lord, that Calvary is Jeho-

vah's abiding evidence of love and standing invitation of grace (3:1-66)? The three lines of each stanza in this A B C acrostic begin with the same letter in Hebrew, and the prophet is again seeking to use a mechanical device as an aid to memory. The facts dealt with here are much the same, but the statements are more personal, the call to repentance is more insistent, the cause of their sufferings is more evident, and the one and only hope of deliverance and restoration is more emphatically given. Jeremiah gives his own experience under affliction as an example for his people, and holds out to them the same hope which brought comfort and safety and final triumph to him.

He reminds them that it is of the Lord's mercy and because of Jehovah's great compassion that they are not consumed. He insists that the Lord will not cast off forever those who are his own; that though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion; that he does not from his heart willingly afflict and grieve the children of men; that it is good to both hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord; that in the very day in which he called upon Jehovah the answer came. God said to him, "Fear not," and from that time the Lord pleaded the causes of his soul and from that time his life was redeemed. In the same way the Jewish nation may be restored. In the same way must we today call upon the God of Jeremiah. The book of Romans quotes from the prophet Joel the message of hope, that "every one without exception who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The same truth which Jeremiah proclaims is found even more clearly in the New Testament, that it is not in consequence of things which we as righteous people have done, but as the result of his own mercy that

the Lord has saved us by the washing of regeneration and the removal of our natures by the Holy Spirit through the riches of love in Christ Jesus. God is rich in mercy, and by his grace and love saved us, though formerly we were governed by our lower natures and though we even as others were deserving of divine anger. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need.

There is a story told of a young man who died on the gallows for his mother. He was charged with the murder of his father, and though he knew he was not guilty he took the blame. In her anger the mother had struck the father with an instrument of iron, and the son was leaning over him washing the blood from the wound, when someone saw through the window, and gave the testimony which convicted the son. He was brave enough to die without telling on his mother, and the whole truth was not known until the mother later made her dying confession. While we were guilty and helpless, Christ at the right moment died for us. Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, although for a mother someone would perhaps have the courage to die; but God gives proof of his love for us in that while we were sinners and enemies Christ died for us.

Richard Waggoner once asked Robert Ingersoll if there was a God, and the reply was, "I don't know." The next question was, "Is there a future life?" The answer was the same, "I don't know." Then Mr. Waggoner asked there in the lobby of the Toledo hotel in the midst of a great crowd, "Is there a heaven?" "Is there a hell?" Ingersoll gave the agnostic's reply, "I don't know." Waggoner said, "If you don't know, why are you talking so much about

it and charging us fellows a dollar apiece to hear you do it?" Richard Waggoner was later converted, and in the furnace of the church where he confessed Christ he burned up his library of infidel books, no one of which had any message of comfort or hope for lost and sinning men.

4. Is it nothing to you that the present condition of God's people is in such sad contrast to their former position and glory, that indignities and injuries are now heaped upon those to whom respect was shown and honor was formerly given, that the devastation and ruin which had come upon them were the results of the sins and the unfaithfulness of those who should have been examples of loyalty and leaders of righteousness (4: 1-22). In this elegy the people are called upon to look upon the famine-stricken condition of the city, to behold the failure of all human help to rescue the Jews from their enemies, and to witness the satisfaction of Edom in beholding their downfall. Then there follows a prophecy as to the doom of Edom and the final return of Zion from captivity.

The temple is laid waste, its gold is become dim, and the carved stones of the sanctuary are thrown about among the common rubbish. The princes and priests are no longer honored as heirs to the sacred covenants of Jehovah. Little children are perishing for lack of sustenance, and the parents have nothing with which to supply them. People of rank and dignity are not known in the streets, and because of their sufferings in the terrible siege are not recognized by their friends. Jerusalem has died of a lingering illness, and as one kept upon the rack feels himself die, so had the city of Zion failed slowly and terribly.

The people were not guiltless, for they had followed

the leadership of evil men, but the chief blame for all of these sorrows was upon the prophets for their sins and the priests for their iniquities. Those who should have been helpers were hinderers, and instead of being wise and far-seeing leaders they had wandered as blind men in the streets and had so polluted themselves with the innocent blood of good men as to make themselves odious to others. God reminds the Jews that the Gentile nations round about had seen their plight and esteemed them worthy of all that had come upon them, and that Judah would watch in vain for any help from any nearby nation. No succor came, though they watched long and earnestly, and the Chaldeans when they came to attack Jerusalem were so numerous and so swift and so powerful and so well equipped for siege and for battle that none was able to escape.

Their enemy, Edom, would do well to cease her derision, for the troubles of Zion will not continue longer than necessary to bring the children of God's family back to their better selves. On the other hand, those who take delight in any suffering and humiliation which must come to the saved, only prove themselves to be of such attitude toward Jehovah as to make certain their own terrible undoing. God will surely discover their sins, will bring their iniquity to light, and coincident with the return of God's people there will come also the complete downfall of the wicked.

Man has discovered how to turn sand into glass and the soot from petroleum into paraffin, but only God can take the devil's outcasts, to which George Whitefield referred, and make them into transmitters of light and servants of mankind. The Lord can take William Bruce, the drunken lawyer, and make him into the fine

Christian gentleman and into the great winner of souls from the gutters of Louisville to the places of confidence and service. He can transform that other man who had deserted his wife for seven years into such a nobleman as that his consecrated companion can say, "Tom is a better Christian than I am." Hop Hadley, the drunkard and forger, can be so saved as to make him the friend and helper of the derelicts of New York. How marvelous is the contrast between Saul the persecutor and Paul the missionary; between John Bunyan the drunken and profane tinker and Bunyan the author of "Pilgrim's Progress"; between Jerry McAuley the debased and staggering river thief and the man who was said to have been more beloved than any man in New York.

Is it nothing to you that the contrasts in life are so evident; that sin drags down to hell, that holiness lifts up to heaven? Is it nothing to you that our nation is facing the captivity of godless materialism, that our educational institutions must turn anew to Jehovah, or help us to a more speedy destruction? Is it nothing to you that the individual and the home and the church can never come into leadership and power unless the Bible and prayer and worship and holy living and loving service have their divine and God-given place?

5. Is it nothing to you that the one great hope and first duty for the people of God is a new turning unto the Lord in acknowledgment of sin and a plea for compassionate regard? (5: 1-22). This whole book is a review of the miseries of the Jews and of the sufferings which they endured in the siege and capture of Jerusalem, and of their present condition in the land of captivity. Their inheritance is turned over to

strangers and their houses to aliens. They are as helpless as orphans. Water which was formerly free to them they must now pay for with money, and they are made to buy every fagot of wood with toil. Their necks are under the yoke, they labor and have no rest, and those who were once servants now rule over them. Their women are disgraced, their princes are hanged, their young people are made to carry burdens so great that they fall under them.

They are ready to acknowledge that all of their woes are due to their own folly and sin. They are grieved over the harvest of their wrongdoing, but the thing which is of chief concern to them is that the mountain of Jehovah has become so desolate that foxes walk upon it. The reproach which had come upon the religion of their God was their chief occasion for sorrow. They have hope that Jehovah's eternity and the never failing continuance of his dominion will yet be the foundation for the rebuilding of their nation.

They plead with God to turn them again from their idols to himself, and in this way they acknowledge their own weakness and sinful condition. They want to be a willing people, and want through divine grace and power to be as they were in the days of old. In the very last verse they ask, "Wouldst thou utterly reject us?" They seem to say, "No, that cannot be, and now we cast ourselves upon thy mercy and omnipotence, and pray thee to turn us unto thyself and to restore us as in the former times." The destruction of Jerusalem, the captivity of the Jews, the horror of exile cannot take from Jeremiah his faith in Jehovah. When Jesus asked as to the opinions of men concerning himself he was told that some said he was Jeremiah.

Both came on their mission in troublous times; they both wept over Jerusalem's condition; they both were rejected and despised and mistreated; they both taught that punishment for sin was just, and that man's only hope was in God's love and grace; they both knew that God's faithfulness would never fail, and urged repentance and trust and love and service; they both urged the people to cast themselves upon the compassion of God, and to pray for pity and longsuffering and mercy.

When but a boy the writer heard a Chicago evangelist tell of an experience in a Wisconsin city where he had conducted a revival meeting. A man there asked the minister to look out for his big boy who had left home, and to tell the son, if he should ever meet the young man, that mother was dying to see him and that father loved him and was eager for his return. Mr. Brown, the preacher, said that after two years he was in this same town, and that Mr. Stewart, the father, was at the train in the inclement weather. In answer to Mr. Brown's expression of interest, he said that he had not missed being at the train a single time in the whole two years.

Again, after another absence of eleven years, Mr. Brown returned, and Mr. James Stewart, the old father, was there at the station as usual. He said in reply to questions that he was there looking for his boy and though he had heard nothing he was still expecting his son to reutrn. While they were talking the father saw coming down the steps a young man whom he recognized, and dropping his cane he hurried as fast as his enfeebled condition would permit him, and taking his long lost boy in his arms said, "Oh, my son, thank God, you have come; you have

come." Later he said to the minister, "I would have waited until I died."

How like the story of the prodigal son, and how like the longing of Jehovah which the prophet Jeremiah portrays over the sinning and suffering Jews, and how like the call of Jesus to those who turned away from their own Messiah! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" May this same Savior be able at last to say to us, O America, America, thou to whom God in his wisdom and mercy didst commit the stewardship of the gospel in the time of the world's crisis, and thou to whom there were given position and wealth and the good will of the peoples of the earth, blessed art thou! Thou didst resist the subtlety of worldliness, thou didst triumph over the folly of materialism, thou didst stand firm against the renewed and repeated attacks of unbelief! Blessed art thou among nations, for when unrighteousness and idolatry and impurity and injustice and infidelity would have turned thee to decay and to captivity and to extinction, thou didst inscribe upon thy heart and home and factory and wisdom and wealth, "In God we Trust."

God is good and merciful and wise in his purposes and plans and providences, and if we are ready he will give us a glad and far-reaching part in his kingdom. A little Chinese boy who had been taught in one of the Bible schools at Ning Po was taken by his father on

a trading expedition to the Korean capital. In some way he was stolen, and later was sold to the governor who presented the slave to his wife. He became her page, doing her errands, and ready at her commands. Small as he was, he talked to her of the Savior about whom he had learned and to whom he had been taught to pray, but she gave little or no heed. One day her baby died, and in her grief she asked the young Chinese child to tell her again of Jesus and of his life and ministry and death and resurrection, and of the salvation and help and comfort which he gives. Again and again he told what he knew, until she believed and accepted and enthroned the Savior. Thus through a faithful little messenger, when other attempts had failed, the gospel gained entrance into Korea and into the very palace of the governor.

"How broad is his love? Oh, as broad as man's trespass,
As wide as the need of the world can be,
And yet to the need of one soul it can narrow
He came to the world and he came to me.

"How long is his love? Without end or beginning,
Eternal as Christ and his life it must be;
For to everlasting as from everlasting,
He loveth the world and he loveth me.

"How deep is his love? Oh, as deep as man's sinning,
As low as that uttermost vileness can be;
In the fathomless gulf of the Father's forsaking
He died for the world and he died for me.

"How high is his love? It is as high as the heavens,
As high as the throne of his glory must be,
And yet from that height he hath stooped to redeem us
He so loved the world and he so loved me.

"How great is his love? Oh, it passeth all knowledge,
No man's comprehension its measure can be;
It filleth the world, yet each heart may contain it—
He so loved the world and he so loved me."

9: EZEKIEL

(1) *God's desire and man's need.*
(2) *Ezekiel's name and call and times.*
(3) *The prophet's philosophy of history.*
(4) *God makes Himself known.*

I. THROUGH DIVINELY CALLED MEN.

1 A great vision and mission.

2 His acceptance and responsibility.

3 Divinely girded for the task.

II. THROUGH FAITHFULNESS TO HIS REPRESENTATIVES.

1 When punished by their enemies.

2 When their sins are exposed.

3 When their efforts to escape fail.

4 When purified by suffering.

III. THROUGH JUDGMENTS UPON THE HEATHEN.

1 Sin is sin anywhere.

2 Delay in execution does not mean escape.

3 If it be so with the righteous, what of others?

4 God will be known to them.

IV. THROUGH PRINCIPLES AND LAWS OF HISTORY.

1 Opportunity
2 Instruction
3 Responsibility
4 Culpability
5 Forbearance
6 Providence
7 Grace
8 Justice

V. THROUGH TRIUMPHS AND RESTORATION OF TRUE WORSHIP.

1 The promise of restoration.
2 The cause of restoration.
3 The power bringing it about.
4 The temple to be the centre.
5 The growth and glory of the new.

Bible—"If any man will do his will he shall know."

Schlegel—"History is a prophet looking backwards."

Mann—"Every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power."

Maclaren—"There can be no faith so feeble that Christ does not respond."

Fenelon—"God never makes us sensible of our weakness except to give us of his strength."

Cervantes—"History is the depository of great actions, the witness of what is past, the example and instructor of the present, and monitor to the future."

9: EZEKIEL

or

THE FAMILY'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In imagination we may see two American ministers in distress of soul over the sad fate which had befallen their beloved country. One is named Jeremiah, and he sits on the few remaining steps of the capitol at Washington, lamenting the ruin of the great city and its beautiful buildings, and grieving over the fact that the invading enemy has carried away from the homes and halls of the city all of the rich and sacred treasures. The other is named Ezekiel, and he sits in a little house by the river Rhine. With him gather some of the nobler souls who seek to discover the will of God for those who were recognized as chosen people. Jehovah had placed in their hands the true gospel, had given them blessings such as no nation had ever enjoyed, had expected of them loyal and devoted service in making the Lord known to the nations. Sin had entered, treachery had followed, the rulers and the people forgot God, and now they are paying the terrible penalty of sin.

God's great desire is to make himself known. Jesus says that in this consists the life of the ages, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, who is the revelation of the Father. The only-born Son has made God known. The law was given through Moses, but grace

and truth came through Jesus Christ. In Genesis we saw the expression of God's great desire to have a family of children who would know and choose and love and be like him, and through the centuries that eternal purpose has been running. From Eden until now Jehovah has been breaking through to man, and in Ezekiel's prophecy there is given another clear statement of this philosophy of all history.

More than fifty times Ezekiel uses the expressions, "Thou shalt know that I am the Lord," "They shall know that I am the Lord," "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord," "The heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel—" The better we understand nature the nearer we come to him who extends beyond creation's rim, though every tiny atom speaks to us of him. The more deeply we look into the history of the centuries the surer we are that in it all we see the evidences of the divine will and purpose.

"We only see a little of the ocean,
A few miles distance from the rocky shore,
But oh! out there beyond—beyond our eyes' horizon
There's more! There's more!

"We only see a little of God's loving,
A few sweet treasures from his mighty store,
But oh! out there beyond—beyond our life's horizon
There's more! There's more!

The name Ezekiel means "Girt with strength," "The strength of God," "God will strengthen." The prophet was the son of Buzi the priest, and was another preacher's boy through whom God has blessed the

world. Recently in New York City there was held a meeting of newspaper men who were the sons of ministers, and among them were the financial editor of the *Literary Digest;* the assistant managing editor of the *World;* the publicity director of the Near East Relief; the professor of the Pulitzer School of Journalism of Columbia University; the city editor of the New York *Globe;* the owner of the New York *Evening Post;* the director of the Department of Journalism of New York University; the publicity manager of the Methodist Centenary Movement; the managing editor of the New York *Mail;* the managing editor of *Collier's Weekly;* the secretary-treasurer of the International League of Press Clubs; the editor of the New York *World;* and two editors of the *Literary Digest.*

Ezekiel was called to be a prophet in the fifth year after being carried away by Nebuchadnezzar in 599 B. C. He was in the first company which was taken from Jerusalem. The policy of the invading king was to take out the very flower of the people, believing that the rest would be under better discipline in their despoiled land or that the scraps of the nation left behind would show no further resistance. The better and more godly class had accepted the advice of the prophets and had surrendered, but the others were willing to make any compromise in order to remain, and later they would fall deeper into idolatry and sin and would suffer the horrors of siege and famine and the agonies of inhuman treatment. Jeremiah was left to minister to this class in Jerusalem. Ezekiel worked among the better disposed ones in the land of captivity, who at first were stunned and unresponsive and rebellious at their condition but who later recognized in their enslavement the chastening needed, and found in it their

way to purity of worship and unity of national life and mission.

Ezekiel had followed the reformation under Josiah; had possibly witnessed the tragedy of his death from the archer's arrow; had maybe seen the execution by Jehoiakim of the good prophet Urijah, after he had been hunted down; had probably seen Jehoahaz led away into Egyptian exile; had been for thirty years most intensely interested in the preaching and work of Jeremiah; and now was himself a captive in a foreign and unsympathetic land. Pythagoras, who lived in this same period, says that he had for a tutor "Nazaratus Assyrius," and some go so far as to think that this was Ezekiel and that his fame was so great even among the heathen as to bring their foremost thinkers to him for study.

Ezekiel's prophecies were given over a period of twenty-two years, or up to twenty-seven years after the first captivity and forty-three years before the final return. Jeremiah's prophecies began before Ezekiel and continued after him for some six or seven years. A little later Daniel will be another prophet whose life was spent in this heathen country, and he will tell more of the outward concerns of the people while Ezekiel tells of the inward. The elders of Israel came down to Tel-a-bib by the river Chebar to enquire of Ezekiel as to the welfare of the Jews, and as to whether they would be permitted to return to Jerusalem. In reply this hope he held up before them, based on the promise of Jehovah, but he admonished them that they must first return to the Lord.

The style is stimulating, and while the language is simple and clear, the imagery and symbols are bold and intricate and mysterious, so much so that Ezekiel

was not read by Jewish children until they were thirty years of age, the fear seemingly being that they might be discouraged by its mystery and austerity. There is a wonderful combination of the simple and the magnificent, the practical and the spiritual, the priestly and the prophetic, the vision of the seer and the uncompromising harshness of the leader. To an unusual degree Ezekiel portrays those who are wilfully blind and who are determined not to believe and tells how there follows real blindness and a deepening guilt.

Ezekiel's philosophy of history is most clearly stated in the thirty-sixth chapter, but it is easily traced through the whole book, and comes to definite statement so many times that the reader cannot fail to see it. From the call to prophecy (1-3), through the predictions as to destruction (4-7), the forsaking of the temple by Jehovah (8-11), the exposure of prevallent sins (12-19), the statement as to national guilt (20-23), the beginning of the terrible siege of Jerusalem (24), the predictions as to the foreign nations (25-32), on to the promise as to the better time to come for his people (33-39), and to the order and beauty of the new and restored kingdom (40-48), we find the underlying thought to be that Jehovah wants to be known, and that in the history of all peoples in all ages he is seeking to reveal himself. He wants a people who, having seen in him the holiest and best, have chosen him and have through grace come to bear the likeness of his Son, that he might be the eldest in a vast family of children (Rom. 8:29).

1. God seeks to make himself known through the messages of divinely called men (1-3). In the case of Ezekiel this call came from a life of priestly ministration, and came after years which were filled with

many tragedies, and after experiences of separation and captivity and suffering. The call came in connection with a mysterious vision as to divine wisdom and power, which told him that help and strength would not be wanting to one whom the Lord called to service. He was given a mission, a divine mission, and was made to understand that the people would not at first be humbled and would not respond to the real purpose of their troubles. At first they would need severity, but later they would need comfort. A great evangelist, when asked why he did not in preaching to the rich and prosperous give the usual emphasis to God's love and tenderness, said that this class now needed law and justice, while the people who were down and were broken in heart were ready for the story of pardon and comfort and help.

Ezekiel accepted this task at the call of Jehovah, realizing something of the responsibility involved, and being given assurance that he would be girded for his mission. God does not leave himself without a witness, and as Cooper says, "The pulpit must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand, the most important and effectual guard, support and ornament of virtue's cause." Ezekiel ate the little book offered to him, receiving the truth and digesting it, and then opened his mouth and spoke it to others. At first it was sweet and was much enjoyed. A fuller understanding of his message of woe brought painful reflections, and yet it became to him a wholesome diet and brought to him increasing strength. He knew that the hand of the Lord was upon him, and going forth into the plain of "Khabour" (so beautifully described by Mr. Beecher) to there talk with Jehovah, he fell upon his face before the Most High God, but

was lifted to his feet and was allowed to speak with the Lord as with a friend. "Go shut thyself within thy house" was the immediate command given, and there communing with God in secret and there talking with those who came to seek him out, he followed on to be the divinely commissioned adviser and leader of his people.

From age to age the Lord has made himself known to the world through patriarchs and prophets and apostles, through some Polycarp, some Ignatius, some Origen, or Basil, or Gregory, or Chrysostom, or Augustine, or Patrick, or Boniface, or Anselm, or Peter Lombard, or Arnold of Brescia, or Bernard of Clairvaux, or Peter Waldo, or Thomas Aquinas, or Francis of Assisi, or Anthony of Padua, or Berthold of Regensburg, or Luther, Wicklif, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Savonarola, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, Latiner, Ridley, Knox, Wesley, Whitefield, Fuller, Carey, Judson, Livingstone, Yates, Spurgeon, Williams, Brainerd, Edwards, Finney, Moody, Penn, Torrey, Jeter, Witt, Hatcher, Dixon, Carroll, Gambrell, Broadus, Mullins, Truett. Such men have seen that sin is exceeding sinful and is terrible in its results, that in some dread way the wages must come. They have been led to review as Ezekiel did their lives, and to know how empty and meaningless are the years unless given to God and to service for others in his name. They have heard the call of the Lord to repentance and to separation and to dedication, and have heard the cry of the souls imprisoned in walls of sin and doubt and fear, and have felt the urgency of the divine privilege of being God's representatives in delivering the captors.

One night urgent knocking and repeated ringing of

the doorbell brought a pastor to the upstairs window of his home to enquire as to the midnight visitor. He was told that it was one of the young men of the congregation and the summons was quickly answered. The pastor thought it was as to the sickness of the aged grandmother, or that maybe it was for an interview in the name of the great daily newspaper on whose staff the young man held a place. As the door was opened he entered and grasping the pastor's hand said, "Doctor, I will have to preach." Then followed a story of continued struggle, and of delay and of recurring conviction, and of the repeated attempts that night to silence the voice which was so insistent. Finally the surrender was made. The young man had hurriedly dressed and started for the pastor's home some ten or twelve blocks away, and said that he ran the last two blocks, so eager was he to make known the victory, and so fearful was he that even then another delay might be gained by the tempter.

2. God seeks to make himself known through his faithfulness to those who are his representatives (4-24). The Lord could easily have permitted the extinction of the Jewish race, but he wanted to cure them of their idolatry and to preserve them and to make himself known to the world through them. In this section of the book the prophet shows that Jehovah did this in four ways, first by allowing their enemies to triumph over the Jews and to become the Lord's servants in chastening his own (4, 5); secondly by exposing their secret sins and by rebuking their idolatry (8-11): then again by letting them see how utterly futile were all of their attempts to escape the results of wrong doing (12-19); and finally in bringing out by means of punishment the purification pleas-

ing to Jehovah and the cleansing which became joyous to those who had been enduring affliction (20-24).

The Jews who were the first to be carried captive hoped for a speedy return, but Ezekiel using a Babylonian tile portrayed the siege of Jerusalem which was yet to take place. To the dismay of the exiles he showed the final and utter downfall of all that remained, and told in most awful fashion the rigor of the famine which was to accompany the renewed attack upon Zion. The little food they had would be made foul by the filthy fuel used in cooking, and would be costly beyond anything they had ever known, and all of their Levitical rules as to the clean and unclean would not deter them from whatever abominable flesh they might be able to get for satisfying their terrible hunger. In shaving his head Ezekiel showed the humiliation impending, and the divine decree allowed not one hair to escape. Weighed in God's scales one-third the people were to perish by the sword; an equal number would fall victims to famine and pestilence; and the rest would be sent into exile among the nations. Jehovah says that in this way he will not only punish them, but will also disclose to the world his righteousness and his justice. Under the symbol of a chain the prophet pictures the slavery into which they have brought the land, and the slavery into which they must go because of their sins.

The image of Jealousy was disclosed to Ezekiel and was occupying a place at the gate of the altar. The licentious rites of Astarte, the Syrian Venus, were being carried on in the sacred precincts of the temple of God. While pretending outwardly to worship the Lord the Jews were carrying on all sorts of secret and abominable idolatries in a secret chamber, upon

whose walls could be found portrayed every form of creeping things and abominable beasts. Here were seventy men, led by the prince Jaazaniah, swinging censers before idols in the house of Israel's God, and in another place were twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple and their faces to the east as they worshiped the sun. Outwardly professing to be loyal to Jehovah they were really engaged in treacherous idolatry, and the cup of their sins was nearing its limit. Awful and indescribable sorrow and suffering and anguish must soon burst upon them because of their iniquity. The visions of the prophet include the cherubim and they make known the fact that God is in the midst of all of this execution, that he is making known to Jew and Gentile his essential holiness, and that God's judgments though seemingly as involved as the vision of the wheels are manifold and are everywhere and are consistent and do not fail. A man clothed in linen and bearing an inkhorn was to set a mark on the foreheads of those who mourned over the abominations of the city, and only those who were thus distinguished were to be spared.

Ezekiel by another object lesson of an exile's outfit, and by combining day and night in his typical moving, portrayed the attempted flight by night of Zedekiah and of his futile efforts to escape. The scattered remnant, who escaped famine and pestilence and the sword, would by their captivity be weaned from idolatry and would make God manifest among the Gentiles. The Jews who were taken away in the former company and who had thought themselves unhappy as exiles would no longer envy those who had been left in Jerusalem, and would be horrified at the sufferings of those who had rebelled and compromised and stayed and sinned.

Ezekiel says that Jehovah sought for a man among them that would stand in the gap and prevent the destruction of the land, but none could be found

Israel and Judah had both played the harlot with Assyria and Babylonia and Egypt, and Jehovah's message to them was that their lewdness would come in fearful judgment upon them, that they would bear the sins of their idols, and through terrible ordeals they would come to "Know that I am the Lord." Their idolatries, their worldly spirit, their alliances with the heathen rather than trust in Jehovah were in violation of their spiritual marriage vows. The walled city instead of being a defense would be turned by their enemies into a boiling caldron, and the inhabitants would be as so many pieces of flesh. Piece by piece they would be taken out, without regard to rank or age or sex, and there would be no lots cast as on other occasions to settle who should be destroyed and who saved and who be led captive. The death of Ezekiel's wife, and the command of Jehovah that he forbear to cry aloud in his mourning over the stroke, even over the taking away of "the desire of thine eyes," was another message to the Jews. Their sanctuary would be taken, and the absence of loud wailing would not be due to want of feeling, but because their captors would not permit public lamentation. They would mourn one to another, they would pine away because of their iniquities, at great cost they would come to "Know that I am the Lord."

The worship of pleasure in our day, the love of money to the exclusion of supreme love for God, the images of self-will, the secret abominations in people's hearts, the earthly loves which set aside any covenant vows to the Lord, the yielding to fads and isms of

mental pride and arrogance, the worship of the newest sun which arises in the realm of science or culture or philosophy, all of these are as truly idolatrous and are as spiritually impure as were the things described by Ezekiel.

A Delaware Indian chief when taught as to the things which constitute the Christian life said, that such a life was not possible, it could not be done, and that specially was the golden rule beyond all hope of any human heart. Later on and after long thought he came back to say, that if the Great Spirit would give him another heart than the one he now had, he could then expect to live as the missionaries had taught. We can triumph over sin, but it can be done not by creeds or ordinances or resolutions or environment, but by the presence and help of the Holy Spirit. If in our endeavor to be true we fail, or if we become discouraged, or if we must endure chastening, we shall find in all of these things some new attempt of God to make himself known to us. When a daughter failed to appear one morning at breakfast the parents found her on her bed with a bottle on which was the label "Poison." Their frantic investigation disclosed the fact that the druggist had substituted an innocent mixture for the poison desired, and when the young lady awoke she was grateful that she had gone to one who knew better than she what she really needed.

3. God seeks to make himself known likewise in his dealings with the heathen and in his judgments upon them (25-32). As the Cambridge Bible says, "Ammen and Moab and Edom and Philistia and Tyre and Sidon and Assyria and Egypt form the proper introduction to the positive oracles of Israel's return. But this restoration of Israel cannot be with-

out great judgments on the nations who have hitherto harassed or seduced her. Those judgments will awaken the nations to the knowledge of who the God of Israel is—they shall know that he is Jehovah."

Four things stand out clearly in what Ezekiel here says concerning the nations. The first is that sin is sin anywhere and everywhere, and that Jehovah's dealings with his own people and with their heathen oppressor will disclose God's hatred for sin and the dread wages to those who are led captive by the devil. The second fact is that delay in execution and that present seeming prosperity should not be misunderstood, for even if sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily they must not presume and think that delay means escape. The third truth to be considered is that if Jehovah does so deal with the sins of the chosen people, where shall the ungodly and the utterly irreligious expect to appear? The fourth fact which Ezekiel gives is that of God's basal desire underlying all history, the divine longing for self-disclosure. "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord." If they fail to recognize him because of their spiritual blindness, and if they refuse the light because of their love of darkness and lest their deeds should be approved, then must they finally confess in justice what they might have accepted in mercy.

The ruins of Tyre, on which according to prophecy the fishermen dry their nets, tell us that the proudest boasts and possessions of men furnish no security for the ungodly. Even Babylon, though she be now the rod in God's hand for chastening the Jews, should not presume. She should learn from Israel the truest wisdom, the fact that our one supreme purpose should be the proper understanding of life in its relation to

God and man. In vain did the reigning Pharaoh recount his twenty-five years of success, and foolishly did he boast that not even a god could deprive him of his kingdom. Even as Ezekiel foretold the exact day on which Jerusalem would be attacked, so did he foresee Egypt's downfall in the very height of her prosperity. "Woe worth the day!" Alas for the day, when the pangs of travail shall begin, when the judgments of Jehovah shall fall upon the heathen, when Pharaoh shall be as helpless as a man with both arms broken, when the land of Egypt shall overflow with seas of blood rather than with the waters of the Nile! The chastening of the Jews shall be temporary, and they shall return, and the Messiah shall appear; but as for those kingdoms which loved only evil and which despised God's lessons to them, they would go down in ruins to rise no more.

Mr. Spurgeon tells of how the flocks of birds, albatross and petrel and pigeon, crowded about the stern of the ship as it drew into the harbor at Cape Town. A hook was baited with fat by someone and cast out among the birds, and instantly they rushed for it. The fact that one after another was thus caught and drawn struggling on to the deck, did not deter the rest from their endeavor to seize the bait when it was again cast among them. Even the ones which were hooked and had escaped would endeavor a second time to secure the treacherous morsel. Mr. Spurgeon adds, "Thus to the letter do ungodly men rush at the baits of Satan; they see others perish, but remain careless, and even when they are all but destroyed themselves they persist in their infatuation."

One of the kings of Hungary was ridiculed by his brother for his concern over the fact that he was a great

sinner, and that he must meet God in judgment. The brother was engrossed with the pleasures of the court, and treated the seriousness of the king as an occasion for repeated jest. There was a custom in Hungary that if the trumpet of the executioner was heard at the door, the occupant of the room was doomed and would be led away to death. The king ordered that the trumpet be sounded at his brother's door during the night, and as a result the doomed man rushed to the king and anxiously enquired as to his crime. The king assured him that if the sound of the death trumpet brought such dismay and such desire to make amends, surely it was well to make ready for appearance before the judgment seat of Christ. Men and nations must give answer to God. They do well to prepare, says Ezekiel.

4. God seeks to make himself known in the laws and principles which underlie all of his dealings, and which repeatedly appear in the history of the nations of the world (33-35). We have seen these laws and principles in the books of the Bible. They have been stated for us in the Scriptures which we have already studied in this course. We have observed their application to individuals and to nations, both Jews and Gentiles. Ezekiel is led by the same divine inspiration to bring them again to our attention, stating them in phraseology a little different, and illustrating them by new figures, and exemplifying them in his own peculiar experiences. From this time to the close of Ezekiel we find him more sympathetic and tender, and comforting, but as a watchman he continues to be faithful lest he bring upon himself condemnation. He yearns over Israel with all of her sin, but he does not compromise, nor does he fail to magnify Jehovah.

The first law restated by Ezekiel is that of responsibility. God gives to each individual, to each member of the human family, to each community and nation, to each position we occupy a certain measure of responsibility. That has been true from Adam and Eve down to us. The second law is that of instruction, in which God enlightens and warns and makes clear by nature and conscience and revelation the meaning of life and the goal of life. The third is the principle of responsibility growing out of opportunity and out of instruction, and always with the statement that privilege and knowledge increase and intensify our responsibility. Following this comes the law of culpability, for all are guilty in proportion to the principle of privilege and light and position and motive. Again Jehovah has been patient and longsuffering even toward the froward, and has given with lavish hand to the just and the unjust. All too often the goodness of God has led to presumption, rather than to repentance. The law of providence has always stepped in to correct and to warn and to win, for all things work together under the Lord's directing will. To those who harden not their hearts, but who turn with a broken and contrite spirit, there is the divine law of grace which carries with it forgiveness and salvation and sanctification. To those, however, who neglect and rebel, the law of justice and punishment must apply.

One figure used by Ezekiel to illustrate these principles is that of the watchman to whom is given opportunity and instruction and responsibility, and who is culpable if he fails of his duty. God was interested and sought in his longsuffering and providence to save through the watchman's warning, and if the hearers gave heed they escaped the destruction which came to

those who took not warning. The author once saw a man drowning in the Thames, who, seemingly bent on suicide, gave no heed to the many efforts made to save him, and was indifferent to rope or life-buoy or boat or life-saver. He was not worthy of help. God does not change, but sin changes us. The law has not been changed when a crime is committed by a man who has lived in safety under the state. That which was his protection now becomes his executioner, because he has changed. The whole situation is transformed the moment he becomes disobedient. So it is between us and God.

The same principles and laws as are illustrated by the watchman, are again implied in the prophecies concerning the shepherds of Jehovah's people. The calamities which have befallen Israel are due as much to the princes and priests and public officials as to the people. Their rulers in religion and in politics were by their neglect and wrong doing equally guilty, for they had been unfaithful and disloyal to their duties. Their treachery and negligence had brought ruin upon them and upon Jerusalem. They had shown that they cared more for themselves than for Jehovah and his flock. From the figures of the sheep, the prophet goes on to announce God's promise, that someday the Messiah will come, and that he will be the Good Shepherd who will lead his people beside the still waters and into green pastures.

Looking back to the fulfilling of this wonderful promise, we can see as they could not see, how big with meaning was that prophecy. The Good Shepherd did come, he laid down his life for the sheep, he gave to them the gift of eternal life, he promised them the protection of the fold of unfailing grace. He did for

them and for us infinitely more even than the French father did, or could do for his son. The young man was condemned to the guillotine, and when the list of names was called, the answer was made by the father, whose name was the same as that of the son. He took the place of the beloved young man, his own child, and rode away in the death wagon to the place of execution, and his head was severed instead of that of his son. It was an evidence of great love, but nothing to compare with what the Great Shepherd did for us when we were weak and ungodly. He not only died for us but he gave new life along with the pardon. He did not merely patch up an old sinful heart, but gave a new heart. A down-and-out man testified in the mission, that he had patched and patched for many years, but that the patches only made things worse for they came off and made the holes bigger. One night in response to an invitation he attended a gospel service. There Jesus found him, and so transformed him that life and home and all were changed. The man said of Jesus, "He didn't patch; he just made me whole."

5. God seeks to make himself known by the repeated triumph and restoration and satisfaction of true worship (36-48). Ezekiel announced the promise of restoration. He was too true to God to tell only of the victories and ravages of sin, and to dwell on the gloomy side of God's dealings. The Lord was not defeated but was making himself known in the flood, at the tower of Babel, in the land of Egypt, in the captivity in Babylon, in the death of Jesus on the cross, in the struggles of Christianity through the centuries. Now as then Jehovah is saying to us, "Ye shall know the Lord." "They shall know that I am the Lord."

The cause of captivity and the reason for restoration are found in this repeated declaration by Jehovah.

The power which alone could bring about the restoration was the power which Ezekiel invoked for the valley of dry bones. The breath of God came upon the slain and caused them to live and to stand upon their feet as an exceeding great army, and that same divine strength could bring the Jews back into the land of Israel. They might come together and organize and seek to retake what they had lost, but it would all be useless aside from the power and favor of God. The challenge of Jehovah is proclaimed to the nations of the earth. Gog and Magog with their armies and equipment will not be able to stand, and by defeat and disaster "shall know that I am the Lord," and "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward," and "The heathen shall know that the house of Isreal went into captivity for their iniquity." Thus, says Ezekiel, shall it be seen that religion was intended to bind people together and to God, and should never have been the cause of division and strife.

Ezekiel places the temple of God at the center in that great new day, and draws a picture of such a structure as has not yet been erected. If it was to be literal, then it has not yet been fulfilled, but it may be in its beginning with the movement of Zionism. If it was to be a spiritual temple it is evidently in the process of building now, and those who come after us will rejoice in adding their part toward its completion. When that day comes all the families of the earth are to worship the Lord and they are to be led in their praises by Israel. Then all shall be one, and the whole world shall be brought to confess that Jesus is Lord.

This same glorious consummation was set forth again, in Ezekiel's vision of the river of the gospel, which was to come forth from Jerusalem, and was to continue on its way through the centuries deepening and widening and increasing and blessing. Then shall the tribes and the strangers have inheritance together in the blessing of the covenant, and the city with its twelve gates shall have a new name. Instead of Jerusalem it shall be called "Jehovah-Shammah," and this name shall indicate the reality of the fact that "The Lord is There."

Some writer in a dream entitled "The Blank Bible" supposed that in one single night every Bible had become blank paper, and also that every quotation from the Bible suddenly disappeared. He said that never before had he any adequate idea of the extent to which the Bible had moulded the intellectual and moral life of the centuries. He saw that at once a vast portion of literature became meaningless, that one could not read ten pages of any book of merit without coming to some inexplicable hiatus. Milton, Scott, Shakespeare, Bacon, and the rest were rendered meaningless. He might have gone on to say the same as to art and sculpture and architecture and music. The greatest things of earth would be gone, and also the foundations for all hopes as to the future.

A little child, who had been so quiet and so uncomplaining at the hospital, and who seemed so unafraid, and who met everyone with a smile, was seen to keep her handkerchief always within reach, and was always careful when a clean handkerchief was brought to transfer something that was tied in the corner. Her mother was of course curious to know what it was about which the child was so solicitous. In answer to the

mother's enquiry Ruth said, "I found it in the drawer when we left home, and I wanted that much with me." She permitted her mother to untie the knot in the corner of the handkerchief and there was found a leaf from the Bible. On that leaf was the verse, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." What a promise to have when going upon the operating table, when awaking to pain, when quietly waiting through the period of reaction, and when the stitches are removed. What a promise to have anywhere and all the time!

A minister, in whose church the music situation had become acute, made the great and serious mistake of endeavoring to correct it by an anonymously written letter. The blame for this wrong was being placed upon an innocent party, and the letter was taken so seriously that the clergyman went to the offended party and assumed all blame. Then the situation became more serious, and it seemed that the only thing to be done was for the minister to resign. This he made all plans to do, saying to the officers of the church that he had always made it his purpose to never knowingly allow himself to stand in the way of the cause of Christ; that he had done wrong and realized it, and wanted as far as he could to correct the serious and grievous mistake. On Sunday morning, feeling it was due all concerned, the pastor made a public and full statement, assuming all blame and announcing his intention of resigning, so that the church would be free to go forward in its work.

The minister's evident sincerity, his genuine sorrow over the wrong done, and his effort to put Christ's cause and church ahead of any personal pride and position, produced an immediate and unanimous response among

those who had realized the seriousness of the situation. A vote of forgiveness and confidence was taken instead of the one expected on the resignation, and from that time there came a new spirit of love and sympathy and fellowship. The church began to grow more rapidly in numbers, the congregations increased, the finances multiplied, the work enlarged, and in every way there were marked evidences of God's favor. As Peter says we must gird ourselves with humility towards one another, for God sets himself against the proud, but gives grace to the humble. We are to cast all of our anxieties upon him, because he cares for us, and are to humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God, so that at the right time, the time when he sees best, he may exalt us above our cares and wrongs and enemies.

"A day of wrath, of darkness and distress,
When God will search with candles, and will seize
The careless doubters, settled on their lees,
Who live in luxury and selfishness.
The enemy, resentful, pitiless,
With banners waving in the morning breeze,
The city gates shall enter at their ease,
And all its treasures spoil beyond redress.

"But sing, O Zion! There's another day
Of God, when he, thy King, who's in the midst
Of thee, shall joy o'er thee, and rest in love;
Thy foe cast out, they judgments take away;
Let thee no more see evil, since thou didst
Not doubt, but patiently his goodness prove."

10: DANIEL

(1) *Religion should bear transportation.*
(2) *Daniel's captivity and training.*
(3) *The purpose in the book of Daniel.*
(4) *The incidents and prophecies.*
(5) *God's people tested among foreign nations.*

I. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NOT TURNED FROM THE TRUTH BY DANGERS.

1 Cannot be bought off by promised preferment.

2 Receive divine wisdom in their hour of need.

3 Are protected and all things inure to their good.

II. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SUSTAINED BY THE SUPERIORITY OF THEIR RELIGION.

1 Superior to all earthly powers.

2 Superior to human pride and attainment.

3 Superior to all man-made religions.

III. GOD'S PEOPLE SEE THE NATIONS CONSERVING JEHOVAH'S PLANS.

1 Nations come into being with his permission.

2 They do his will unwittingly.

3 They fade and pass away.

IV. GOD'S PEOPLE EXPECT THE COMING OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM.

1 His kingdom will meet with opposition.

2 His kingdom will certainly be established.

3 His kingdom will fulfil all their longings.

CONCLUSION:

A. The resurrection is certain.

B. Wait patiently for God's plans to mature.

C. Abundant blessings to those who trust.

Bible—"Have faith in God."

Hervey—"Religion gives a dignity to distress."

Shakespeare—"We must follow, not force providence."

Penn—"Whoever is right, the persecutor must be wrong."

MacDonald—"A perfect faith would lift us absolutely above fear."

Horace—"God can change the lowest to the highest, abase the proud, and raise the humble."

Lowell—"Be he nowhere else, God is in all that liberates and lifts, in all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles."

Brooks—"The absence of sentimentalism in Christ's relations with men is what makes his tenderness so exquisitely touching."

10: DANIEL

or

THE FAMILY TESTED AMONG FOREIGN PEOPLES

"Some people's religion will not bear transportation." This will certainly be the case if it is of the wrong type, but the true will stand the test, and will be purified and strengthened by exposure to a hostile environment. The test of Eden, of Egypt, of the wilderness, of the promised land, of the judges and of the kings, is being repeated in a foreign land. We find that the fires of adversity are producing penitence for sins against Jehovah, that idolatry is being seen in its true light, that the people are becoming united in their gratitude for the law of the Lord, that in the absence from the temple synagogues are being instituted for study and worship, that the sacred literature is being collected, and that a more intense longing for the Messiah and a spiritual religion is being expressed.

Daniel, while yet a youth was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and along with others who were particularly promising he was taken into the palace, was fed from the king's table and trained at his expense. He found such favor and proved himself so worthy, that he was given high position in the government under three succeeding dynasties, the Chaldean and Median and Persian. Descended possibly

from royal blood in Judah, born maybe in Jerusalem, and carried away probably in his early teens, and living through the years of captivity, he knew the Jewish mind and spirit thoroughly. On the other hand, he received training in the etiquette essential to a courtier, and was soon given service in the royal affairs of Babylon. His character, his culture, his wisdom, his piety, his unfailing loyalty to conviction won for him increasing favor. In accordance with eastern customs he received a new name along with his exaltation, and among the Babylonians he was thereafter to be known as Belteshazzar.

The writings of Daniel are divided very naturally into two parts, the first half historical, and the second half prophetic. The purpose evidently is not to give a chronological account of the exile or of Daniel's life, but rather to make plain the continued favor of Jehovah upon his stricken people, to show the means used by the Lord for the preservation of the Jews, to explain the miseries through which they must pass in order to their purification, to give evidence of his love and of his presence with them, and to proclaim afresh the unfailing and ultimate divine purpose. The Jews and the heathen were learning that there is an essential difference between those who seek and serve Jehovah and those who worship idols, that the kingdom of God transcends and controls all earthly kingdoms. The book shows that the prophet saw the sequence of history as a whole, that past and present and future are one connected whole, that the purpose of God is clear and plain even though it may be hidden to the eyes of those who see only the outward events of human history.

Daniel saw that God could and did deliver his

servants from the fiery furnace and from the lions; that no idol could ever take Jehovah's place, that all kingdoms will fall before the kingdom not made with hands, that the promised Messiah would surely come in due time, that religion is a spiritual and personal matter, that one of these days the dead will be raised to everlasting life or to shame and everlasting contempt, and that the brightest lights in God's firmament will be those who have turned many to righteousness. He was given to know that prior to the coming of the Christ there would appear several world powers, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, the Egyptian, the Assyrian and the Roman.

Until the time of the coming of the Messiah, the people must pass through many and grievous trials, but when God's promise is fulfilled the Messiah will take his place as King and Judge and Lord, and he will begin his righteous and universal reign. The power of God manifested in Egypt is seen again in other wonders wrought by Jehovah in Babylon, and his people were as surely to be delivered from the reign of idolatry as they had been from slavery under the Pharaohs. The moral conditions of our day, the seeming reign of those who regard not the law of God, the apostasy of professed religious leaders, the perils of disturbed and wrangling nations, all of these may cloud our horizon today as was the case in the days of Daniel, but a study of this book will surely hearten us and help us to properly represent our Lord and his kingdom before the people who love and serve the mammon of unrighteousness.

The incidents and prophecies are all of the most intense interest. The unity of the book and the authenticity have been questioned, but every reason-

able objection has been answered. Many of the earlier criticisms as to historical facts have been met by discoveries in buried libraries, and what seemed to be grave difficulties as in the case of Darius, have turned out as unusual testimonies to the exactness of the writer even in the smallest matters. The prophet was true to the facts. The book was evidently the work of Daniel, and in our study of it we shall find the unmistakable signs of the omniscience and omnipotence and all pervading grace of God, as manifested in the testing and in the preservation of God's people in the midst of unfriendly nations.

1. Those who belong to the family of Jehovah are not turned away from the true religion by any dangers which may confront them (1-3). They are faithful to their convictions, and cannot be bought off by promises of preferment (1). They are given divine wisdom in their hour of need, a wisdom amazing to their enemies and resulting in the recognition of Jehovah (2). They are protected from harm, and their critics are finally made to see that no evil can befall Jehovah's people, that all things inure to their good, that no good thing will be withheld from those who walk uprightly (3).

Here we have the narration of actual experiences. Daniel along with others had been carried away captive from Jerusalem, and the names of three others are given whose condition was the same as his, and who were selected by the king to be educated and trained for diplomatic and consular and civil service. They were to be given anything and everything that would prepare them for their future work. It was soon evident to these young Jews that their promised preferment was in conflict with their loyalty to Jehovah, and

they purposed in their hearts that they would not contaminate themselves with food sacrificed to idols and with drink which would defile and weaken them. A part of such food was used as an offering to idols, and would have meant at least the silencing of their own convictions. Such a compromise would have been seemingly the easiest way out of an embarrassing situation for them, and politicians and people who hold public office today have just such temptations.

They made request that they be allowed to pursue a different diet, and having found favor in the eyes of the chief steward they were granted the privilege they sought. To the amazement of their keeper they were better looking than all others in their circle, and when the time came for the king to make choice of counsellors these Jewish young men were advanced to a position of favor before the king. They were found to be ten times fitter and wiser than the magicians and astrologers, and proved that real preferment cannot be purchased by surrender of convictions and by compromise with evil.

During the first year of Nebuchadnezzar he ruled as a subordinate to his father, Nabopolassar, but now since the death of his father he had been actual king for two years, when a dream came to him which alarmed him and which after his waking he could not recall. He demanded of the wise men that they reproduce it, or be put to death. This they were unable to do, but Daniel interposed and asked for time, in which he and his friends prayed to God. Then later he made known to the king his dream and its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great image with head of gold, with breast and arms of silver, with belly and thighs of brass, with legs of iron, and with feet of

iron and clay, and then he saw the stone cut out without hands that broke in pieces and destroyed the image.

When Daniel had made known to the king the interpretation that his own kingdom and coming kingdoms would give way before Jehovah, that the kingdom of God could not be held by human power, that Babylon and Medo-Persia and Rome would be destroyed, Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshiped and said, "Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings." World empires built up by human hands can never triumph over the kingdom cut out without hands from the mountain of God's grace and sovereign power.

The Lord was again near to deliver his people at the very time when they were about to be crushed, as seen in the story of the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. None except those who worship Jehovah would have objected to the decree to bow down before this image, for the edict was not exclusive and did not forbid the addition of their own gods. Daniel may at this time have been in some distant part of the kingdom, since he is not mentioned, or he may have been in such favor at court that the enemies were seeking to reach others first and then later to accuse Daniel. When they refused to worship the image the three, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, were summoned and told that they must be cast into the furnace, and were taunted with the question of their God being able to deliver them.

There was no hesitation and no parleying with sin or with fear. They made reply that God was able to deliver them, but that whether he did or not they would not serve other gods. God's grace, which kept them true amid such hatred and temptation and danger,

was as great as the power which delivered them from the hurt of the flames. Cast into the furnace bound, the fire but loosed them; and made to face death by themselves they found another, a fourth one, a heavenly visitor in attendance upon them. The king as a result decreed the worship of Jehovah. This must have made a tremendous impression upon the Jews, and must have shown them the absolute folly of idolatry as well as the omnipotence of Jehovah.

Does all this sound as if it were impossible? If so, just recall the modern miracles which have taken place and even now are occurring in foreign lands. Yonder in Malden, Massachusetts, a boy baby was born in 1788, who soon showed himself as wonderful a child as Daniel. At ten he was studying Latin and Greek, and after a very pronounced struggle with infidelity, he came to one outstanding question in everything, and this was, "Is it pleasing to God." Following a decision to go as a missionary, he met the four young men who held the famous haystack prayer-meeting, and after a long time and after many testings was able to begin his work in Burma. When he was thirty-one years old, and when he had been in Burma six years, he baptized his first convert, and said that the prospects were as bright as the promises of God.

Then came war and hatred for the missionaries, and imprisonment and persecution due in part to the fact that the natives did not know the difference between the English and those who came from the United States. Mr. Judson was delivered from death more often than the recorded deliverances of Daniel, and his being able to survive the horrors and inhumanity and prolonged agony of those days is as marvelous as that of the den of lions or the fiery

furnace. No man can read the life of such a man as Judson, or Livingstone, and not be convinced that they were marvelously protected, and also that those who are truly saved are not turned away from their religion by any dangers which may confront them.

2. Those who worship Jehovah are sustained among foreign peoples by the superiority of their religion as contrasted with others (4-6). Earthly rulers and their pride of power is as nothing to the Lord, who made and who controls the earth and the heavens (4). Human pride and power may lead to impiety and sacrilege, but these things must soon meet their own reward (5). The mouths of lions are not too much for the Lord, and the hardest circumstances may be controlled for the good and the advancement of his own and for the punishment of those who seek to bring them harm (6).

The king Nebuchadnezzar himself tells us that he had a vision which troubled him greatly, and led him to call for the wise men and ask for an interpretation, and that none was able to give an explanation. He says however that Daniel only could tell what the great tree meant, and warned him concerning his pride and foretold that he would become a lunatic and would dwell with the beasts in the field, and would eat grass as did the oxen. Abydenus, a heathen historian (268 B. C.) says that the king, after his conquests and achievements, was filled with pride and boastfulness, and that while walking on the palace roof and viewing the city which he had built, he was seized by some strange power and predicted the downfall of his own kingdom and the triumph of Persia. This is in accord with the Bible statement (4: 29, 30), that Nebuchad-

nezzar boasted of his majesty and power, and that while the words were in his mouth the hand of God fell upon him and the dream came true.

The king says, "At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned upon me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation: and all of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

Following this story of the folly of human power and egotism, Daniel gives an account of the impious feast of Belshazzar, and of how he sent for the vessels of the temple of Jehovah, which had been brought away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and of how Belshazzar and his crowd of wicked companions held a sacrilegious feast and in defiance of Jehovah drank wine from these sacred vessels to idols. Xenophon coincides with Daniel in his estimate of Belshazzar, and of his undoing. The handwriting on the wall brought terror to the cowardly mob, and its interpretation was fulfilled that very night, after the faithful Daniel had reminded him of his folly and of his wickedness.

The historians of Babylon were too proud to record the fact that Belshazzar was shut up in his own city and captured, and so they did not record the surrender

of the son and subordinate, but rather that of his father Nabonidus yonder in Borsippa. The Assyrian inscriptions, however, have explained what has been a seeming discrepancy. Belshazzar was second in position, his father being first, and he offered the third place to Daniel if he would make plain the handwriting. Before daylight Cyrus in the name of Darius entered the city, having diverted the Euphrates into a new channel. He was guided by two deserters, and marched by way of the river bed into the heart of the city while the Babylonians were conducting their sacrilegious orgies, and according to Herodotus and Xenophon and Daniel the capture was sudden and complete. Cyrus, the young and energetic nephew mentioned by Herodotus, turned over the kingdom which he had now conquered to the weak and sensual Darius, now seventy-two years of age. The Lord Jehovah is fulfilling prophecy, is rebuking sacrilege, is exalting his own servant, and teaching us that pride goeth before a fall.

Daniel retained the confidence of the new dynasty, and was so honored with the passing years that officials and men in high position envied him and sought his downfall. They were jealous of his advancement, and hoped to take his life. It was surely a great compliment to him that the grounds on which they sought to accuse him were his faithfulness to Jehovah and his obedience to the law of the Lord. As one has said, "The three children were cast into the fiery furnace for not committing a known sin, Daniel was cast into the lions' den for not omitting a known duty, and God's miraculously delivering both them and him is left upon record for the encouragement of his servants in all ages to be constant and resolute in their abhor-

rence of that which is evil and in their adherence to that which is good."

A decree was obtained that no one should pray to any god or man, save the king, for thirty days, and that to do otherwise would be punished by being cast into the den of lions. The plot was successful in picking out Daniel as the offender. His preservation and deliverance were only the greater proof of Jehovah's care for his own, and it was not strange that the accusers of the man of God should be the ones to suffer the fate which they had desired for Daniel. So again in a foreign land and among a strange people the Lord Jehovah was magnified. The Darius of that time, even as the Pharaoh, the Cæsar, the Emperor, the King, the President of other times and places, was led to say, "He is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be ever unto the end: he delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth."

A young man called his sister to task for her attendance upon the dances, and she sought to defend her conduct by saying that she was just as good a Christian there as anywhere, and that she was not influenced for wrong or injured spiritually there. The brother suggested that next time she attended a dance she talk to her companion about being a Christian. She promised, but on being questioned the following morning, she said that she did not get to it, but would not fail again. The brother called for a report on this second promise, and the sister said that she asked her dancing partner as to being a Christian, and that in his surprise he asked her to repeat the question. She did so, and he replied, "No, I am not a Christian. Are you?"

She answered in the affirmative, and he said, "You are? Then what are you doing here?" It is wicked to take sides with the enemies of God.

Even the little water-spider can present the evidences of God's wisdom and care. It lives and lays its eggs and rears its young in a water-proof cell. It must therefore have air down under the water in which to live, and must have equipment and the instincts to enable it to construct and maintain its submarine home. It spins under the water its little residence, attaches it securely to something stable, comes to the surface for a bubble of air, and carries it down to the opening with its hind legs which are so covered with hairs as not to be affected by water. Little by little the spider's home is thus filled, the water is replaced with air, and then a cocoon is constructed for the protection of the eggs. If all of these many instincts and this delicate equipment are essential to the life and the propagation of the water-spider, what would have become of them during the long process of evolution? This manner of life could not have begun until these highly specialized organs were complete, and the conceit of the Edomites cannot long be able to maintain that all such examples of special creation are results of "continuous progressive change, according to fixed laws, by means of resident forces."

David Livingstone in his work as a missionary and pathfinder in Africa was delivered from the lions more often than was Daniel. Only one time did a lion leave its mark upon him, and the eleven tooth marks and the crushed shoulder were in after years the indubitable evidence that the body borne across the continent and brought to England was that of the beloved Livingstone. In Africa and China and America and every-

where we find strength in the fact that Christianity transcends any and all of the religions of the world. The missionary on foreign fields and the worker in hostile places in the home land know that other religions are not as ours, even our enemies themselves being the judges.

The believer in the teachings of the Bible and in the life and ministry and death and resurrection and enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ, knows that he has the best God to worship, "for what nation is there so great that has a God so nigh unto them?" The best understanding of the world, the best explanation of creation, the best treatment of man, the best ethical system, the best ground for progress, the best plane on which humanity may express its best self, the best and only plan of redemption, the best ideal for life, the best armor in which to meet and conquer death, the best hope of the best eternity, all of these and more belong to those who are the heirs of God and who are seeking among men to be the representatives of the Lord Jehovah.

3. Those who trust in the Lord and who are endeavoring to truly represent him know, that the passing empires and peoples are made to conserve and to complete Jehovah's great and gracious plans. The book of Daniel, as the book of Ezekiel, has a world view, and sees the nations of earth in their relation to God and his gracious designs. The angle of vision is different for the two prophets but their understanding of the progress of Jehovah's kingdom is the same. Paradise lost is to be one day regained, and is to be a greater and more glorious paradise because there the Savior is to be older brother in a great family of children who have been redeemed from sin, and who

have learned to love and appreciate the holy and righteous and just and merciful Father for his own sake and for the gift of his Son and for the work of the Holy Spirit.

It will be interesting to note the empires, and to see their part in the plan of God as they pass in vision before Daniel. The Chaldeans and Babylonians are raised to greatness by Jehovah and are for a time made his messengers to chasten his sinning people and are at the same time given opportunity to learn of the true God. Their time was 625 to 536 B.C. Then came the Medo-Persians and they from 536 to 330 B. C., were given a place in sending the Jews back to Jerusalem, in purifying them from their idolatry, in shaping their synagogue worship, in gathering their literature, and in preserving the confirmation of important facts. The Greeks under Alexander the Great, in a series of battles, ended the Persian rule and gave to Bible lands the language in which Christianity was to express itself.

Then in terrible struggles between Egypt and Antiochus Epiphanes the Jews were to undergo their most fearful persecution. Everything possible was to be done to destroy the worship of Jehovah. The temple was to be desecrated, and closed, the city was to be sacked, and the Jewish religion was to be altogether forbidden. This was to be followed by the brief period of Maccabean independence, and then Rome was to stalk across the stage with heavy tread and with coat of mail. All of these passing powers were in the world view which Daniel had, and rising from them and above them and ruling over them he saw more and more clearly the kingdom of God.

In chapter seven the prophet sees the coming world

nations in their moral and spiritual aspect, rather than in their physical and political position. They are as four wild beasts which come out of a turbulent sea, a lion and bear and leopard and another dreadful beast which is not named and which has great iron teeth and ten horns. It is generally agreed that the ten horns as the ten toes, refer to the European governments which would succeed the Roman empire. The little horn is sometimes thought to be Antiochus Epiphanes, and in that case the ten horns would probably refer to those powers which arose after Alexander the Great. The little horn, however, is more probably "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," the attempts of the papacy at world empire, the final development of the evil principle, the Antichrist. In any case, and whatever the interpretation, Daniel sees the final and complete triumph of the Messiah.

In chapter eight two of the kingdoms already referred to are seen again as a ram and as a he goat. The ram had two horns, Media and Persia, and this beast is to be overcome by the goat with its one horn, Alexander, and he after waxing great is to be followed by four smaller horns of power, the constituent parts of the Grecian empire. Then out of these arose a man, another little horn, who was to be the most wicked and the fiercest enemy the Jews had ever encountered. Through him the sanctuary was to be desecrated, and worship was to be practically suspended, and by him even the flesh of swine was to be offered upon the sacred altar. Not understanding the vision, but knowing that it meant terrible things for his people, Daniel fainted and fell sick for many days, and was astonished at it all and could find none who could make known its meaning.

Turning from these mysterious and terrible portents, the prophet betakes himself to confession and prayer, and is given to see that though the seventy years of captivity are coming to their close this does not mean the immediate coming of the expected salvation through the Messiah. He prays God to pardon the sins of his people, and to once more restore the worship of the sanctuary, and while he prays an angel comes to reveal what must take place in connection with the coming of the Anointed One. God let him know that he was greatly beloved, and therefore was being given the divine mysteries. "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." The numbers here have been the subject of varied interpretations. Maybe they cannot yet be understood because not yet fulfilled, but in verse twenty-six Daniel says the Anointed One shall be cut off and again he concludes with the making of the firm covenant of grace and power and victory.

"Daniel on his knees was a mightier man than Darius on his throne." While praying God gave to him the immediate response for which his soul was longing, and along with it an assurance of God's special love. The historian tells us that on the eve of battle in the war between the States a general said, "We have got them now and they know it. God Almighty cannot save them." The commander on the other side was a praying man, and he had that very day for hours been alone in his tent asking God for divine interposition against human certainty and boastfulness. When the battle was over the commander who prayed was again

in his tent alone, and was offering grateful thanksgiving for the strange and complete victory. The presumptuous general was fleeing down the Shenandoah Valley before the very men whom he had said God Almighty himself could not save from defeat.

4. Those who serve Jehovah will continue to believe in the coming of Messiah's kingdom, and will expect the fulfilment of all prophecies concerning it, and will work toward that divine consummation (10-12). In the three preceding chapters of Daniel's prophecy we saw (1) that empires and rulers come into being and power under divine permission, (2) that they even in their wickedness are made to do his will unwittingly, (3) that because of their idolatry and wickedness they fall and pass away. Now in the closing chapters we see (1) that his kingdom will surely meet with persistent opposition, (2) that none can withstand Jehovah's will and none can prevent the final establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah, and (3) that the desires and hopes and longings of those who love holiness and hunger and thirst after righteousness will be fully satisfied in the kingdom of heaven.

These last three chapters begin with a twenty-one day period of fasting, and there came to Daniel by the Tigris river the vision of a man clothed in linen, girded with pure gold of Uphaz, his body like beryl, his face as lightning, his arms and feet like burnished brass, and his voice as the voice of a multitude. Those with him did not see the vision, not being as beloved as Daniel. In great consternation he hears the heavenly messenger, and is told that the purpose is to bring him the assurance of his favor with God, and to tell him of coming events. The messenger says that he was detained by the opposition of the powers of dark-

ness, that the prince of Persia was seeking to do all the mischief he could to the Jews, and that the prophet was to be strong and to be encouraged because though the world powers were against Israel the powers of heaven were with them.

Then follows in chapter eleven a comprehensive statement as to the course of events, the rise of the Greeks following the going out of the Persian empire, and the division of Alexander's kingdom into four. The struggles of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae and the cataclysmic career of Antiochus Epiphanes are foretold, and Persian and Greek and Egyptian and Syrian wars and persecutions reach their dread climax in the abandonment of Jewish worship and in the abomination of desolation, when the altar of Jehovah is defiled by swine's flesh. It seems quite evident that these prophecies have, as do so many others, a fuller meaning which is yet to be seen and understood, for our Savior told the Jews in his day to expect "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet."

The Jews were to suffer at the hands of the besieging Romans as they had done under Antiochus Epiphanes, "the illustrious," who was also called "Epimanes," "the insane," and it seems, from the statements of the New Testament, that there will come another and fuller and final time of persecution and testing for those who in the last days remain true to the Messiah. The outcome is not uncertain, for the same Jehovah is with his people, and the same results must come to the wicked, and the same triumphs will come with the final overthrow of the wicked and the final enthronement of the Prince of Peace.

In the last chapter of Daniel we have the epilogue to the prophet's vision. In the tenth chapter was the pro-

logue, and then in the eleventh the prophecy. The political triumph which the Jews were to enjoy under the Maccabees was only a prophecy and picture of a greater triumph, when the Messiah is to be triumphant over the Antichrist. That which is close at hand is to be finally and completely fulfilled in that which is further removed and which is pre-eminently spiritual. The time of trouble, when Antiochus Epiphanes would persecute the Jews as no other ruler had done, would be a picture and prophecy of the time when Satan would be turned loose upon the followers of the Son of God.

Daniel is given to see the resurrection. If the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was to be as a valley of dry bones come to life, and if the freeing of the people from the murderous tyranny of Antiochus was to be a political awakening as from the dead, how much the more glorious will be the resurrection of the many who through the gospel of Christ shall rise from among those who sleep! How terrible to the others will be the rising to shame and everlasting contempt! The Lord pronounces a blessing upon those teachers who are wise and who turn men to righteousness, and promises that they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and though the stars may some day fall from their places in the skies, those who have been faithful shall continue forever and ever to reflect the infinite light and glory of their Savior.

Transported by such hopes in the midst of grievous trials, the prophet asks, How long shall it be? and what shall be the end of these things? To the first question the answer of the messenger clothed in linen was in numbers hard to be understood; and the answer to the second question was to the effect, that Daniel should

go faithfully about his duties, and not expect to fully understand these mysteries until they were fulfilled. The Lord Jehovah had fixed the time, and those who trust and serve him must wait patiently for God's plans to mature, assured that he will take care of his own and that there will be abundant blessings to all those who have trustfully waited and who have been faithful unto the end. To us as to the aged Daniel the final word comes, "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

The story is told of two young clerks who worked alongside each other in Providence, R. I. One was thoughtless and ungodly, the other was the exact opposite. A leaf of the Bible was about to be used by the first of the two with which to wrap a package, and the other young man said to him, "Do not tear that, it contains the word of eternal life." The first young man put in his pocket the leaf from the Bible, and later unfolded it with some degree of curiosity to know what might be found there. The first sentence that met his eye was this last command to Daniel, "But go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Enquiry followed as to the meaning of such a statement, and resulted in a changed attitude toward God and a changed heart and character and life.

Those who are often at Christian deathbeds find that many precious gems are washed up there by the tides of eternity, and they cannot fail to contrast these with the hopelessness of men and women who know not Christ. George Washington could say, "It is well"; John Quincy Adams, "It is the last of the earth, I am content"; Daniel Webster, "I still live"; Admiral Penn, "I am weary of the world"; General Havelock, "I am

not in the least afraid, to die is gain"; Stonewall Jackson, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees"; Martin Luther, "Father in heaven, though this body is breaking away from me, and I am departing this life, yet I know that I shall be forever with thee, for no one can pluck me out of thy hand"; D. L. Moody could triumphantly exclaim, "Is this death? Why this is glorious! Earth is receding! Heaven is opening! This is my coronation day."

Patrick Henry, when it was popular to be among the skeptical, and while he was governor of Virginia, had printed at his own expense a book on "Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion" and also an edition of "Butler's Analogy," and himself wrote an extensive answer to Paine's "Age of Reason," but he was so impressed with English replies to this same book that he did not publish his manuscript. It was his custom to give one of the above publications to any young man he met who was skeptically inclined, and there can be no doubt that such a book presented by such a man was read and treasured and followed.

Patrick Henry was devout in soul. It was his custom to fast on the days when he was to be at the Lord's Table, and to spend the remainder of the day in retirement. In his last will and testament, which he wrote with his own hand, he concludes the paper by saying, "This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed." It is no wonder that he could face death as calmly as did Daniel. It is still a custom with Virginians and others to visit the grave at the old Henry home and there recall the incidents concerning his death.

His physician, Dr. Cable, was about to administer

some medicine which he regarded as a last resort, and was asked by Patrick Henry what the effect would be. Dr. Cable replied, "It will give you immediate relief, or—" He did not finish the sentence, and Mr. Henry said, "You mean, doctor, that it will give relief, or prove fatal immediately." The acute inflammation of the intestines was explained to him, and the physician said, "You can live only a short time without the medicine, and it may relieve you." He asked Dr. Cable to excuse him for a few moments, and drawing his silk cap which he was wearing down over his eyes, he prayed for his family and his country and his own soul, and then following the "Amen" he lifted the medicine to his lips and swallowed it.

Dr. Cable was so overcome with emotion that he left the room and went out upon the lawn and wept, for he greatly loved and admired the old patriot. Regaining control of himself he came back into the room, and found the governor calmly watching the blood congeal under his finger nails. The great lover of political liberty had been made free in Christ Jesus. The great orator was hearing the voice which Daniel the prophet had heard. Looking up at the physician with whom he had often talked about the Christian religion, he said with quiet tenderness and with supreme confidence, "Doctor, I wish you to observe how real and beneficial the religion of Jesus Christ is to a man about to die." Gently he breathed out his last, and those about him realized that the greatest victory won by the old patriot was the triumph over death, that the greatest words he ever spoke were those which he uttered as he was dying, that the greatest liberty he ever enjoyed was the freedom which came to him in Christ Jesus.

God! "In the beginning God!" Man's most persistent longing is God; his unending problem, his greatest responsibility, his highest attainment, his supremest reward is God. Man is athirst for God. Every one of us must give account to God. We are more and more conscious that it is the height of folly to seek anything contrary to the divine will. We shall be satisfied only when we come to see him as he is and to be like him. The greatest thoughts that can come into the human brain are those which relate to God. As Voltaire says, "If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him." Coleridge asks, "How did the atheist get his ideas of that God whom he denies?" The fool hath said in his heart, "No God for me." Fear God, trust God, serve God, and be afraid of that man or woman or nation that does not fear and love and trust and serve him. "With God, go over the sea; without him, not over the threshold."

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